

**INTRODUCTION
TO
THE STUDY OF THE HOLY QUR'AN**

WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE IDEAL PROPHET
THE SOURCES OF CHRISTIANITY
THE THRESHOLD OF TRUTH
THE SECRET OF EXISTENCE
TOWARDS ISLAM
ISLAM AND ZOROASTRIANISM
ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION
TABLE TALK
OPEN LETTERS
ISLAM AND THE MUSLIM PRAYER
THE RELIGION OF JESUS AND TRADITIONAL CHRISTIANITY
THE GREATEST OF PROPHETS
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MUHAMMAD, THE HISTORICAL PROPHET
ISLAM TO EAST AND WEST
SAYINGS OF THE PROPHET

INTRODUCTION
TO
The Study of the Holy Qur'an

BY
THE LATE KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN
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ENGLAND

PREFACE BY
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THE WOKING MUSLIM MISSION
AND
LITERARY TRUST
THE MOSQUE, WOKING, ENGLAND

PREFACE

It is a privilege to write a Preface to a posthumous work of the late Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din of world-wide renown. His knowledge of Muslim theology was vast, and his learning great and thorough. The immense literature which he produced testifies to that. He was a pious Muslim who sincerely devoted his whole life to the service of Islam, and worked hard till the end for its propagation in Western countries. Every one who met him was impressed by his charming personality, affable manners and kind-heartedness. It may not of course be possible to agree with all his interpretations of the Quranic texts; but there can be no doubt that he presented Islam in a new light, and his presentation was superb. There is no man who was more responsible for a wide dissemination of Islamic teaching and thought, or who showed the light of Islam better to the Western people.

The false calumny that had been spread against Islam from the Mediæval Ages needed a thorough exposure. Alarmed by the simplicity of the Islamic doctrine of the Unity of God, which clashed so unmistakably with the complicated doctrine of Trinity, Christian Missionaries had carried on a well-organised propaganda against Islam, distorting its tenets, misrepresenting its doctrines and misinterpreting its teachings. For centuries, the European peoples remained under a delusion, and their notions about Islam were ridiculously absurd. Many European authors, prejudiced by religious bias, while pretending to reproduce Islamic doctrines, deliberately gave a false colouring to the real picture. For example, they distorted the metaphorical expressions used with reference to Heaven and Hell, and

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substituted crude and often misleading literal translations. As the Islamic texts lay concealed in the Arabic language and were wholly inaccessible to the Western peoples, calumny and falsehood could stalk abroad without detection. In his Introduction, the late Khwaja has thoroughly exposed such false conceptions.

Shunning all sectarianism, Khwaja Sahib endeavoured to present a united Islam to the English people. The success achieved by him was marvellous, and it can hardly be denied that his efforts culminated in bringing about a complete change in their outlook towards Islam. His twenty years' work (1912—32) for the Woking Mission will ever redound to his credit. He started with little resources, but his indomitable faith brought him a signal success. The Woking Mosque built by Her Highness the late Begam Sahiba of Bhopal, of revered memory, was opened, and the headquarters of the Mission transferred from London to the new centre. He was the true founder of the Woking Mission, and its remarkable achievement was due entirely to his guidance. Even if success were to be judged only by the number of converts, the Woking Mission has indeed been a success. Unlike the Indian converts to Christianity, who have come mostly from the poor and needy classes, the English converts to Islam came from the educated, cultured and enlightened sections of society. The *Islamic Review* founded by him in 1913, and followed by the *Ishaat-i-Islam*, was the vanguard of the Movement. He was the pioneer of missionary efforts in the West, who unfolded the true Islamic tenets; and his numerous lectures, learned sermons and eloquent orations will ever be remembered.

Khwaja Sahib has in Chapter II emphasised the miraculous beauties of the Holy Quran, and its teachings of

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Monotheism, Universalism and Democracy, and also shown how several prophecies were fulfilled. In itself it presents a great miracle. It contains at several places God's own promise to be its preserver; and we know that the Holy Quran has been handed down intact from generation to generation, wholly free from corruption and tampering. No other sacred book can equal the Holy Quran in its pristine purity. It was the ennobling character of its spiritual teaching which transformed barbarian Arabs into civilised saints.

The entire Islamic civilisation is imbued with religion through and through. Religious ideas dominate our everyday life and are inextricably associated with our thought. The apparent division of Islam into subsidiary sects has been chiefly due to the divergence of views on the authenticity of Traditions handed down from mouth to mouth. But the basic point of agreement among all is the unaltered text of the Holy Quran, accepted with complete unanimity, which forms the great foundation, the very bed-rock of all the religious schools of thought. Interpretations may slightly differ, but the unsullied text still remains available for every seeker after Truth to read and interpret it for himself.

Islam is the only religion which preaches the absolute Equality of Man. Our Holy Prophet (peace be on him) was ordered by God to announce "Verily I am only a man like unto you." He never proclaimed any superiority over other men. The only difference between him and other human beings was that the true religion had been revealed to him. All distinctions of caste, creed and colour were abolished by Islam, and the entire Islamic society was unified into one organisation and not split up into grades of social order.

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Khawaja Sahib has pointed out that "there have been times in the world's history when Nature was worshipped as God, and its various manifestations accepted as deities." All the ancient peoples were polytheists, believing that not only their deities, but even their kings and heroes, were descended from gods, and were thus above the common run of men, occupying a position due to their ancestry to which the ordinary people could never aspire. Among the Greeks and the Romans also, society was divided into aristocrats and commoners, patricians and plebeians. As Khwaja Sahib has said "The Jewish Patriarchs plumed themselves on being the people chosen for His message and for this reason they proudly called themselves Sons of God." The Jews believed themselves to be the only favourite people, for whom specially the blessings of God were meant; the rest of mankind were Gentiles, who could never become Jews. The inequality of Man is ingrained in the Indian Society, and has assumed a most acute form of a sharp division into the four castes, it never being possible for the Sudras to belong to any of the three high-born classes which themselves are graded, inter-marriage and even inter-dining between them are absolutely prohibited. Happily, the barriers are now in the process of obliteration. The followers of Christ are not immune from such prejudices, as colour prejudice is more rampant among Christians than among the followers of any other religion. The colour of the skin, determined by the climatic conditions of the various countries, is with many the only criterion of civilisation and culture. In some countries even churches are not thrown open to coloured people, who must offer prayers separately. And now the ancestry of the Jews evokes social ostracism and persecution, notwithstanding the historical fact that Christ himself was of Jewish origin.

As against all these narrow prejudices, Islam stands highest among all religions in proclaiming that all men are

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equal, that no man is born sinful, that every man has a divine soul and, despite all defects and deformities, is capable of being a spiritual equal of another, the only test of greatness being piety. "Verily the most honourable of you in the eyes of God is the one who is most careful of his duty." (49 : 13) The test of merit is the standard of virtue and not race. In the words of Khwaja Sahib "Islam came with a universal dispensation. It took the whole world as its diocese, and preached its truths to the whole human race. It preached Universalism. It declared that all mankind belong to the same family, (And are not people but a single nation) and are one race. The Holy Quran demolished all artificial barriers, which separated one nation from another. It welded black and white into one harmonious whole and established universal brotherhood throughout the whole world." On the occasion of the Haj al-Wida (Farewell Pilgrimage) our Holy Prophet (peace be on him) announced to the world that all men are brethren to one another and equal in the eyes of God, and declared that on that day he trampled under his feet all distinctions of caste, colour and nationality. The equality and fraternity of mankind was the new universal doctrine which Islam offered to the world. This great philosophy of the Equality of Man and the Brotherhood of Mankind taught by Islam is not yet fully appreciated, and it may still take centuries before the full value of this great doctrine comes to be realised.

Not finding any other vulnerable point, the Western Missionaries have made the permissibility of polygamy a target for attack, forgetting that monogamy is a purely social institution. In fact, there is no religion which prohibited polygamy absolutely. The Greeks did not consider it unlawful, for even Alexander the Great and his father Philip had each more than one wife. Polygamy was a common

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practice among the Egyptians. There was no prohibition of it in the Babylonian Code of Hammu Rabi, which recognised cases where a second wife could be taken. The Aryans not only permitted free polygamy, but even practised polyandry. The five Pandava brothers had a common wife, the well-known Draupadi. The Hebrews never objected to plurality of wives. Levirate marriage was common. Indeed the book of Deuteronomy compulsorily enjoined a second marriage with a childless brother's widow. There was originally no limit put on the number of wives that could be taken by a single husband. Abraham himself had two wives. David had numerous wives. Solomon had about 700 wives, besides 300 concubines.

Christian Missionaries assert that their Bible advocates monogamy. This is wholly contrary to fact, as the New Testament does not contain any express text whatsoever prohibiting polygamy. It is only the use of the singular 'wife' that is interpreted as implying monogamy; but the singular always includes the plural. The text of St. Mathews (9: 6): "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder" is obviously against divorce (which is now permitted in all Protestant countries), and not against polygamy. Commentators admit that the following 9th verse, which is now construed as being in favour of monogamy, is "very uncertain." According to the ancient authorities it merely ran as "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, maketh her an adulteress." Indeed, during the first two centuries polygamy was freely practised in Christendom. The origin of strict monogamy is undoubtedly traceable to the Roman influence as it was really the Roman civilisation engrafted on Christianity which brought about a gradual disappearance of polygamy. It is a matter of history that even in the 8th century, Charlemagne, who was honoured as a great Missionary King, had been given the keys of the

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Holy Sepulchre and had been the recognised Protector of Christendom, had two wives at one time, besides divorced ones and some concubines. Even in later years, Philip of Hesse and Frederick William II of Prussia obtained the sanction of the Lutheran clergy for contracting bigamous marriages. After the termination of the Thirty Years War in Europe, when peace had been declared at Westphalia, the Frankish Kreistag at Nuremberg passed a resolution in 1650 that thenceforth every man should be allowed to marry two women. The Anabaptists freely preached that a true Christian must have several wives; and the Mormons regard polygyny as a divine institution.

It was Islam which for the first time not only limited the number of wives to four as fixed in the Talmud, but enjoined further strict conditions which were difficult of fulfilment. "But if you fear that you will not do justice (between them), then marry only one" (Ch. IV, Sec. 1, V. 3). "And you have it not in your power to do justice between wives even though you may covet it" (Ch. IV, Sec. 19, V. 129). These injunctions taken together discouraged polygamy and gradually brought about a common practice of monogamous marriages. It was the Holy Quran which by enjoining the strict condition of absolutely equal treatment first made polygamy impossible in practice. With a clearer realisation of the necessity for domestic happiness and the raising of the status of women, monogamy is an institution just as much practised by Muslims now as by the early Christians, who first had adopted it as a result of a change in the social conditions following upon the emancipation and independence of women.

Islam alone can claim the glory of announcing the great doctrine of the Unity of God in its purest sense. The non-Jewish religions of the world believed in the primitive

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conception of a polythean, populated by millions of divinities, immortal in themselves and yet capable of procreation. The heavens were full of millions of gods who were continually multiplying in number. They constituted a reflex of the increasing population of mankind. It was not easy to visualise how conflict or clash between them could be avoided. Indeed, warfare among the gods was by no means uncommon. Jealousy, greed and revenge prevailed among them. It was difficult to evolve out of such intricate mythology any rational system of allocating divine powers. The god of preservation and the god of destruction had overlapping jurisdictions, and reconciliation of these contrary powers by propitiation of both was by no means an easy matter.

Even though the cardinal doctrine taught by their prophets had been the Unity of God, the Jews had frequent lapses, as they fell an easy prey to the opposite doctrines current in the neighbouring countries. The doctrine of Sonhood, though wholly alien and foreign to the Jewish faith, now and again cropped up as a result of the misinterpretation of the texts. In Ch. 6, V. 2 of the Genesis, men had been described as "the sons of God." In the Exodus Ch. 4, V. 22, the Lord had said "Israel is my son, even my first born." In 2, Samuel, Ch. 7, V. 14, the Lord had said "I will be his father, and he shall be my son." In Job Ch. 1, V. 6 and also Ch. 2, V. 1, the sons of Job were called "the sons of God." In the Pslams No. 2, V. 7, David declared that "the Lord hath said unto me thou art my son. This day have I begotten thee" and again in V. 12 "Kiss the son." It is no wonder then that a section of the Jews misinterpreted the metaphor and began to believe that David was the begotten son of God.

It was the common practice of the Hebrews to address God as Father. This form has been borrowed even by the

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Christians in their prayer "Our Father which art in Heaven etc." Jesus Christ also when praying to God addressed Him as Father, and mankind as the sons of God. According to Muslims, this was mainly responsible for the later belief that Jesus Christ was the begotten son of God. It is only in the last of the Gospels, St. John, Ch. 3, Vs. 16 and 18 that Jesus Christ is called "the only begotten Son of God." Such words do not occur in that emphatic form in any other Gospel. Such a belief destroyed the doctrine of Unity, and substituted for it that of Trinity. Worship of the Father and the Son later necessitated the worship of the Mother as well.

It would not be out of place here to refer to the great masterpiece of the late Khwaja Sahib, "The Sources of Christianity"—which has done more than any other book to expose and dispel superstition that had surrounded pure religion. The late Khwaja Sahib in his masterly style has collected together the ancient beliefs which were the direct precursors of some of the notions of Christianity. Quoting several authorities, he showed how the ancient deities were sun-gods born of virgin mothers near about the winter solstice and were called Saviour and Deliverer. They descended into the under-world and rose again from the dead. In particular, he quoted extracts from Robertson's 'Pagan Christs' to show how the Christian doctrines had a very close similarity with those of Mithraism, which had been flourishing in Persia for about 500 years before Christ. Remains of Mithraic monuments have been discovered in England. "Mithra was believed to be a great Mediator between God and Man. His birth took place in a cave on December 25. He was born of a virgin. He travelled far and wide; he had twelve disciples; he died in the service of humanity. He was buried, but rose again from the tomb. His resurrection

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was celebrated with great rejoicing." Similar legends were current regarding other sun-gods, particularly Baal of Babylon and Buddha of India. But the Holy Quran proclaims "Say: He is God, the One and Only; God the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; and there is none like unto Him." (Ch. 112).

The last Chapter on the 'Riddles of Life' deals with the difficult question of Fate or Predestination. A clear distinction exists between natural phenomena and human actions. All Natural Laws are unchangeable and admit of no infringement. The Law of Causation works inexorably. A natural event is the inevitable result of a cause, but free-will has been granted to every human being, who possesses a certain amount of freedom of action. He has the option of taking the right or wrong course, for which there is no compulsion on him. It is for him to elect to adopt either. God has set all human beings on the right path and then left them to their discretion. Of course there are restrictions and limitations placed by the environments in which a man is placed. In that sense there is a partial restraint on his physical actions, but there never is an absolute compulsion for committing any sinful act which depends mainly on his volition. In the words of *Shams Bazigha* by Mulla Mahmud "Man has determined freedom and constrained volition." But the Holy Quran has made it perfectly clear that we all are under the eye of the Omniscient God, Who sees everything that may be hidden to human eyes, or even concealed in the innermost recesses of our minds. He foresees the entire future, and His Prescience as to what will happen involves no interference with human volition, as knowledge of the future does not imply any compulsion or forced action.

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S. M. S.

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CHAPTER I.

REVELATION A NECESSITY

Providence sees to the satisfying of every appetite in us ; for the law of Demand and Supply must obtain everywhere in the Universe, or the object of Creation would remain unfulfilled. Besides our appetites, all our instincts and tastes have been studied, as it were, minutely. If the human eye longs to look on beautiful things and the ears to hear pleasing notes, the whole of Nature is teeming with beauty, rhythm and musical harmony. How can we think for a moment that Providence ignores our chief cravings if He has met every requirement with such exactitude? If consciousness appears appreciably in animals, it obtains in man the capacity to reach perfection. Knowledge is its chief requisite, and it must come from Above like other things we need. In knowledge lies its nourishment and its strength. We crave to know more and more of everything. The more unseen a thing is, the more our curiosity is roused. God is the most Unseen¹ of all.

How could we rest content and remain without trying to know Him? It would be an insult to His Providence. If He implanted in us this most natural demand, the supply—this knowledge—came in the form of Revelation. Revelation, therefore, is in fact a necessity and it must be satisfied.

¹ Vision comprehends Him not, and He comprehends (all) vision ; and He is the knower of subtilities, the Aware. (6 : 104).

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Unfortunately we live in days when most of the received Revelations are unable to meet the demands of culture, and culture has consequently denied the existence of and necessity for Revelation. A Book from God should, therefore, give us convincing reasons for its appearance. I wonder if the Bible, or any of the other books accepted as Divine, contain such reasons. The last Book of God, however, is full of them. To begin with, the Quran advances the same argument to which I have alluded above. He, it says, is the Creator and Nourisher of all the worlds. He looks to the sustenance required in the order to which a thing belongs. Man has passed through many physical worlds in his evolutionary journey, and enters into the world of consciousness when he assumes the human form. He needs some nourishment from the Universal Sustainer which means something in the way of conscious knowledge. If God out of His own accord has provided for all needs, He must surely send us knowledge as well, and that knowledge has come to us in the form of the Quran.

Secondly, the Book speaks of the Law of 'Measure' which plays a most important part in the Universe. All was chaos² till the law of measure and proportion converted it into the cosmos. The whole world is now a thing measured.³

Ethereal specks through different phases of specialization—their combination in various measures and quantities—reach ultimately the kingdom of the elements, where they accumulate and enter into the human frame. Matter

¹ And the heaven, He raised it high, and He made the measure. (55: 7).

² Then He directed Himself to the heaven and it is a vapour, so He said to it and to the earth: Come both, willingly or unwillingly. They both said: We come Willingly. (41: 11).

³ Allah knows what every female bears, and that of which the wombs fall short of completion and that in which they increase; and there is measure with Him of every thing. (13: 8).

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reaches its perfect form¹ in man's body though that body is composed of the same materials²—starch, proteids, grease, liquid, sugar, phosphorus, salts, etc.—of which other animals have also been made. It is a case of the difference of the 'Measure' under which the same things assume different shapes and morals. The Book, when speaking of this Law, refers to man's chief gift, that is, his speech,³ which is only the product of the different measures in which sounds come from the mouth as a consequence of the exercise of the guttural, lingual, dental and labial organs. Consonants, when arranged in different measures, through vowels, become articulated and convey meanings. Thus, 'bit', 'but' and 'boot' have each got two consonants, 'b' and 't', as the bed-rock of the three different words; but the letters, by themselves, are meaningless. They acquire different significations from the use of our labial and dental organs in various measures by the employment of 'i,' 'u' and 'oo.' Music, rhythm and harmony are only different measures of the sound we emit. After referring to our speech, the Book makes⁴ mention of the Heavens and of the luminaries therein, and of the vegetable world. All these work in certain measures⁵ and do perform their respective functions. If things in a chaotic state in the physical world are capable of producing such wonderful results, when they work in measures, the

¹ Certainly We created man in the best make. (95 : 4).

² Then We cause to grow thereby gardens of palm-trees and grapes for you; you have in them many fruits and of them you eat;

And a tree that grows out of Mount Sinai which produces oil and a condiment for those who eat.

And most surely there is a lesson for you in the cattle: We make you to drink of what is in their bellies, and you have in them many advantages and of them you eat. (23 : 19, 20, 21).

³ Taught him the mode of expression. (55 : 4).

⁴ The sun and the moon follow a reckoning. And the herbs and the trees do adore Him. (55 : 5, 6).

⁵ And the heaven, He raised it high, and He made the measure. (55 : 7).

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necessity for our knowing the Law of "Measure," as applied to consciousness, that is to say, to the moral and spiritual order, is plain enough, seeing that evil and good are only different measures of the same thing. Morals in their primitive form are mere animal passions, but they lose their carnal nature and become sublimated into high morals and spiritual excellence when the Law of "Measure and Proportion"—that is, propriety of their use—is observed. We needed to be guarded against their abuses, and the knowledge required for this protection was revealed in the Quran. The eighth and ninth verses of chapter 55 consequently say, "That you may not be inordinate in respect of the measure and keep up the balance with equity and do not make the measure deficient."

Thirdly, the Quran says, that we have in us capabilities¹ of the highest order. Rationalism² holds the same view. But the Quran goes further. It discloses, that if we soar to the highest of the high, we may also descend to the lowest of the low.³ We do, therefore, need knowledge that may keep us on the right path and act as a safeguard from pitfalls by the way. Such knowledge can only be from the Creator of things that become good⁴ or evil in different forms. Nay, God lies under a sort of obligation to us in this⁵ respect and therefore He should enlighten us.

Fourthly, if we are to be punished for breaking any Law, we ought to know of that Law beforehand, seeing that Nature seems to be inexorable in exacting her penalties.

¹ Certainly We created man in the best make. (95 : 4).

² Professor Lecky.

³ Then We render him the lowest of the low. (95 : 5).

⁴ Most surely man is in loss. (103 : 2).

⁵ And upon Allah it rests to show the right way, and there are some deviating (ways); and if He please He would certainly guide you all aright. (16 : 9).

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The Quran admits this principle¹ and God sends us the required knowledge. The Book, in the concluding section of its second chapter, speaks of God's government over the whole Universe, of our accountability to Him for every action we do and of the punishment we are likely to receive for our misdeeds.² The Book says that God has sent His Laws to every nation through His messengers, but that the Law was not a burden.³ Let St. Paul make it a curse, if he will. It is a blessing, since it repeatedly informed us of the bounds⁴ we had to keep in order to secure real happiness and prosperity.

Fifthly, we are often in the dark and do not know how to come out of it. Surely, we need some light from the Unseen to guide us when thus benighted.⁵

¹ Whoever goes aright, for his own soul does he go aright; and whoever goes astray, to its detriment only does he go astray; nor can the bearer of a burden bear the burden of another, nor do we chastise until we raise an apostle. (17: 15).

² Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allah's; and whether you manifest what is in your minds or hide it, Allah will call you to account according to it; then He will forgive whom He pleases and chastise whom He pleases, and Allah has power over all things.

The apostle believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers; they all believe in Allah and His angels and His books and His apostles. We make no difference between any of His apostles; and they say: We hear and obey, our Lord! Thy forgiveness (do we crave), and to Thee is the eventual course. (2: 284, 285).

³ Allah does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability; for it is (the benefit of) what it has earned, and upon it (the evil of) what it has wrought: Our Lord! do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake; Our Lord! do not lay on us a burden as Thou didst lay on those before us; our Lord! do not impose upon us that which we have not the strength to bear; and pardon us and grant us protection and have mercy on us, Thou art our Patron, so help us against the unbelieving people. (2: 286).

⁴ It is made lawful to you to go into your wives on the night of fast; they are an apparel for you and you are an apparel for them; Allah knew that you acted unfaithfully to yourselves, so He has turned to you (mercifully) and removed from you (this burden); so now be in contact with them and seek what Allah has ordained for you, and eat and drink until the whiteness of the day becomes distinct from the blackness of the night at dawn, then complete the fast till night, and have not contact with them while you keep to the mosques; these are the limits of Allah, so do not go near them. Thus does Allah make clear His communications for men that they may guard (against evil). (2: 187).

⁵ I am Allah, the Seeing. (This is) a Book which We have revealed to you that you may bring forth men, by their Lord's permission, from utter darkness into light to the way of the Mighty, the Praised One. (14: 1)

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CIVILIZATION UNDER THE QURAN

The Book puts forward several other cogent arguments to justify the coming of Revelation, and they will be noted later on, as occasion arises. But here I will speak of one thing that often appeals to me. Both culture and the Quran tell us that we are the Lords of Nature. But we were content to remain its menial servants for ages. We could not claim our position, could not even dream of doing so, until the fact of that position was revealed¹ to us from the Most High. We ought to have known how to utilize things of Nature, but that power was a treasure, sealed from us *till the coming of the Holy Book*. Then all the manifestations of Nature gradually began to receive homage from us, though they had to pay us the same. No secular knowledge could have brought them under our dominance, till a Word from God enlightened us, and turned the tables in our favour. We could not have made any progress at all, if Nature had not begun to serve us. Let Modern Culture meditate on two things, to wit:—(a) All our civilization depends on our mastery over Nature; (b) no human effort, prior to Islam, could enlighten us as to this principle of civilization. Was not Revelation, then, a necessity if the Quran came to open our eyes to this grand truth?

CIVILIZATION IN VEDIC DAYS

There have been times in the world's history when Nature was worshipped as God, and its various manifestations accepted as deities. Such days could not be

¹ Allah is He who created the heavens and the earth and sent down water from the clouds, then brought forth with it fruits as a sustenance for you, and He has made the ships subservient to you, that they might run their course in the sea by His command, and He has made the rivers subservient to you.

And He has made subservient to you the sun and the moon pursuing their courses, and He has made subservient to you the night and the day. (14 : 32, 33).

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favourable to the growth of progress, since it would be sacrilege even to think of exacting service from the object of our adoration. If the people of the whole Northern hemisphere, especially in countries situated above the temperate zone, bowed down before the Sun as their God, so much so, that the great luminary was given the place of the Son in the Trinity of Zoroaster, and fire, his first-begotten child, received also homage as God from his followers in Iran and the ancient *Rishis* in India did the same. The first hymn of the Rig Veda, the sacred book of the Hindus, adores fire as a deity. The rest of the book contains hymns invoking other gods, like 'Water' and 'Air.' A new school of thought in the Hindu community, which is adopting the Monotheism of Islam, asserts that *Agni*, *Vayu* and *Jal*—the Sanskrit equivalents of the three said elements—are the three names of God represented in the elements that are most useful to mankind. We need not bother about this interpretation of the new scholars, since they cannot get away from those times when India was frankly polytheist and worshipped these same elements. The utmost that could be said on the subject would be that the sacred words were then misinterpreted by idolaters. Even now most of the Hindus take exception to the new interpretation. How could such a time be favourable, as I said before, to material civilization? So India had to go without this sort of progress. Though civilization in ancient days in this country has been much boasted of, unfortunately history cannot bear out the boast, seeing that men of old, in India, did not cultivate the art of writing history. Inscriptions discovered by archæologists are the only written history we possess. Doubtless they indicate some sort of civilization, but a

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very small part of Nature seems to have been reduced to human service in those days. Even the earth was not, at that time, properly cultivated, and its treasures remained undiscovered to an even greater extent. We read in the Vedas only of rice, pulse and a few other cereals. Even the poetical imaginings of Kalidas could not beautify the garden of Shakuntala—the heroine of his drama—with the variety of flowers we now find in the gardens of the civilized world. The Great Mughal was the first, in India, to enhance the beauty of Nature in various ways. The earth, with its wealth of beautiful hues and colours, which has created in us the taste for decorating our surroundings with them, was not cultivated before Islam. If India remained satisfied with yellow, the colour of the popular Indian flower *gairda*, which pervades the whole garden of Shakuntala, Iran loved the deep red which resembles fire. The earth was prepared so as to produce flowers of various colours, and gardens began to present the most fascinating scenes, by reason of their many coloured flowers, when the Quran¹ declared that God created the world full of hues to act as our reminder that we should cultivate in ourselves æsthetic tastes.

Similarly, such an important aspect of civilization as the culinary art was not being properly cultivated anywhere in the world at that time. If India remained contented with her cereals, vegetables and pulses in her kitchens, people in the West could find no better victual than raw beef or the undressed flesh of game. Iran, no doubt, had her special food in some improved form; but the Muslim, for the first

¹ And what He has created in the earth of varied hues; most surely there is a sign in this for a people who are mindful. (16: 13).

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time in the world, was inspired by the Quran¹ to convert the flesh of various animals and corn and other grains into various delicacies. Fruits² were transformed into drinks, preserves and pickles. Different condiments³ came to season the dishes on our table, while many-coloured flowers were used for its decoration. The art of weaving, which had to wait for Islam before any improvement came its way with the refined⁴ taste in clothing ourselves, was cultivated under the Muslim regime. While people in temperate zones used *khādi* and a coarse kind of silk for their apparel, Indian *Rishis* preferred to remain naked, save, of course, for the lower part. The inhabitants of the Northern regions used the skins of wild animals to protect them from cold. But there, again, the Muslims made wonderful progress. Cotton, silk and wool were found to make the most fascinating kinds of cloth. Akbar, the Great Mughal, obtained some thirty different patterns from cotton; and the name of Nurjahān should ever be remembered, wherever scents and perfumeries are in question.

The whole aspect of the world was completely changed when the Revelation of the Quran brought us a new Gospel reversing the relations which had hitherto existed between Man and Nature. Nature was not the Master, said the

¹ Then We cause to grow thereby gardens of palm-trees and grapes for you; you have in them many fruits and of them you eat;

And a tree that grows out of Mount Sinai which produces oil and a condiment for those who eat.

And most surely there is a lesson for you in the cattle: We make you to drink of what is in their bellies, and you have in them many advantages and of them you eat. (23: 19, 20, 21).

² And of the fruits of the palms and the grapes—you obtain from them intoxication and goodly provisions; most surely there is a sign in this for a people who ponder. (16: 67).

³ And a tree that grows out of Mount Sinai which produces oil and a condiment for those who eat. (23: 20).

⁴ O children of Adam! We have indeed sent down to you clothing to cover your shame, and (clothing) for beauty; and clothing that guards (against evil), that is the best. This is of the communications of Allah that they may be mindful. (7: 26).

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Quran, but our minister and servant. The Book did not reveal the truth in terms of analogies, but it made particular mention of things like the sun, the moon, the stars, the clouds, the oceans and the rivers, the mountains, the day and the night—the gods of the ancient world—and declared that we were their 'masters. The Gospel also spoke of means that would enable us to reduce Nature and make it our servant. Civilization thus began to progress by leaps and bounds. Tastes and appetites, not felt before, widened the circle of our necessities in every department of human activity. The Book went so far as to assure us that whatever wish we cherished or imagined would find means for its fulfilment² in the resources of Nature. No wonder the world waxed enormously rich in all that made for comfort and happiness. The Book also disclosed certain wonderful truths, and I would again ask the people of culture and science to reflect if anything else was needed to complete our progress than the Revelation promulgated by the Quran; the world would have remained in the dark, even now, if the Quran³ had not come to enlighten it.

THE QURAN A NECESSITY

Soon after the time of Jesus, an age of utter decline and decay settled down on the world as though it had been

¹ Allah is He who created the heavens and the earth and sent down water from the clouds, then brought forth with it fruits as a sustenance for you, and He has made the ships subservient to you, that they might run their course in the sea by His command, and He has made the rivers subservient to you.

And He has made subservient to you the sun and the moon pursuing their courses, and He has made subservient to you the night and the day. (14: 32, 33).

² And He gives you of all that you ask Him; and if you count Allah's favours, you will not be able to number them; most surely man is very unjust, very ungrateful. (14: 34).

³ Allah is the guardian of those who believe: He brings them out of the darkness into the light; and (as to) those who disbelieve, their guardians are the devils who take them out of the light into the darkness; they are the inmates of the fire, in it they shall abide. (2: 257).

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awaiting for his departure. The Divine Flame which he had kindled in the human breast in the valley of the Jordan began to smoulder, and had already gone out utterly in other parts of the world. Religion had everywhere deteriorated into a code of the emptiest sort of ritualism promulgating a sickly species of theology that killed the spirit of material progress. While the Church in the West taught that man was a vile creature on God's earth and that everything in the earth had been created to pamper the flesh and kill the spirit, Brahmanism, in the East, preached that man had no intrinsic worth at all, nor was there anything of good in him. His only salvation lay in separating himself from all worldly affairs and in leading the life of a recluse in the jungle. Such theologies and philosophies were fatal to progress. Absolute death—spiritual, moral and material—overtook the world, and dense clouds of wickedness and ignorance darkened its horizon. In this gloomiest epoch that had ever been known, a silver line appeared on the Arabian coast. A voice like a thunderclap came to a son of the desert, who sat meditating over the miseries of the world in the recesses of Mount Hirá near Mecca. It was a message from on High, a message that was unique in its character even in the World of Revelation. All former Messages either spoke of tribal well-being—like that which came from Sinai or through the Vedas—or they alluded to personal favour, like that heard on the banks of the river Jordan. The Revelation in the cave of Mount Hirá brought a Universal Gospel to humanity and revealed that the lowest of the low (for such had men become at that time) was destined to be the greatest of the great. The words ' declared that the *Most Honourable God* intended to raise him to a degree of eminence that

1 Read and your Lord is Most Honourable. (96: 3).

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would mark him out as the best¹ among His creation. It also disclosed the way whereby man must attain such a dignity, and the acquisition of a new learning was the remedy ordained by the Revelation² to raise him from his degradation.

Was it but a pleasing phantasy born of the Prophet's own mind, or a Promise from the Most High, or was it a matter for the coming events of history to decide? Yet the Revelation was of a character unique in its grandeur and sublimity, and such as had never been heard before. It remained silent, however, for full six months, when the hearer of the great Gospel was bidden again to begin his work of reformation among the People of Ignorance, as they proudly called themselves. Many other Revelations followed, but it was sometime towards the end of the Prophet's Meccan period that the nature of the prophesied greatness was defined in a chapter entitled the *Bee*. It announced³ that the rule of the Lord on earth was going to be established very soon, and that this rule was no other than the self-same kingdom of God, with man as His vicegerent⁴ on the earth, which had been so anxiously besought⁵ by Jesus in the prayer which has risen continually from every Christian home since then; the first three sections of the chapter⁶ gave the salient features of the Kingdom. The first section dealt with the

¹ And surely We have dignified the children of Adam, and We carry them in the land and the sea, and We have given them the good things, and we have made them to excel, by a (high) degree of excellence, most of those Whom We have created. (17: 70).

² Taught man what he knew not. (96: 5).

³ Allah's commandment has come, therefore do not desire to hasten it; glory be to Him, and highly exalted be He above what they associate with Him. (16: 1).

⁴ And when your Lord said to the angels, I am going to place in the earth one who shall rule (in it), they said: What! wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood, and we celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness? He said: Surely I know what you do not know. (2: 30).

⁵ Matt; (6: 10.)

⁶ Chapter 16 (*Bee*).

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various animals already under human subjection, but the second described certain most surprising phenomena in the kingdom of Nature. It told that the water that comes from the clouds and causes the trees and plants and herbage to grow, comes for the service of man; that night and day, the sun and the moon, and all other luminaries in the starry land, had been created by the Lord to serve the needs of man. After speaking of great oceans, mountains, rivers and roads as parts of the same kingdom, it proceeded to put the whole case in a nutshell. It said that the world was full of gifts for man, that had not as yet come within his comprehension. Truly, a wonderful Gospel. A creature like the man, who at that time had lowered himself to such a state of degradation as to be ready to worship everything he saw as his lord, was, all of a sudden, given these startling tidings that every other manifestation of Nature, including that greatest luminary, which had hitherto been worshipped as God all over the world, were his servants and ministers, and that it was his lot to act as their sovereign. On another occasion the Revelation enunciated, one by one, all the objects that had received human adoration, till then, as God. The Book declared that all these things were the slaves of man. In short everything which had been revered as his lord and master till yesterday was his servant. The message came to a man who belonged to a nation poor in all respects, yet he was chosen by God to take in hand this wonderful task. Let the worldly wise people of culture and science look at the matter in the light of history and ask themselves whether this idea of man's greatness had ever dawned on the human mind before Muhammad? It was not mere imagination but a reality; though much of it has not yet materialized. The

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days are yet to come when the acquisition of new sciences,¹ as prophesied by the Quran, will enable us to bring even the mighty² sun under our yoke, when he will work as a hand-
maiden in our kitchen for the purposes of supplying light and heat.

The same chapter also gives us an insight into the things which had kept man down, and of which the reversal would carry us to the peak of greatness. All our present eminence depends on our reducing Nature to our service. But we have accepted its various components as our God, and a worshipper, as in duty bound, cannot expect any menial service from his Lord. We could not hope to change our destiny unless we cultivated in ourselves a strong sense of Monotheism. (Ch. 16, section 3).

The Book also taught us the way to achieve this miracle. We were told that the whole of Nature was ruled through the agency of angels, who would be obedient to our will³ if we acquired the necessary knowledge. The Quran did not leave us in any uncertainty as to the nature of that

¹ Taught man what he knew not. (96: 5).

² Allah is He who created the heavens and the earth and sent down water from the clouds, then brought forth with it fruits as a sustenance for you, and He has made the ships subservient to you, that they might run their course in the sea by His command, and He has made the rivers subservient to you.

And He has made subservient to you the sun and the moon pursuing their courses, and He has made subservient to you the night and the day. (14: 32, 33).

And He has made subservient to you the night and the day and the sun and the moon, and the stars are made subservient by His commandment; most surely there are signs in this for a people who ponder; (16: 12).

³ And he gave Adam knowledge of all the things, then presented them to the angels; then He said: Tell Me the names of those if you are right.

They said: Glory be to Thee! we have no knowledge but that which Thou hast taught us; surely Thou art the Knowing, the Wise.

He said: O Adam! inform them of their names. Then when he had informed them of their names, He said: Did I not say to you that I surely know what is unseen in the heavens and the earth and (that) I know what you manifest and what you did hide?

And when We said to the angels, Make obeisance to Adam, they did obeisance, but Iblis (did it not): he refused and he was proud, and he was one of the unbelievers. (2: 31, 32, 33, 34).

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knowledge. The service of God was clearly the first requisite in obtaining this ascendancy over the angels, but we had also to study¹ the universe at large in the light of the said service. We had to understand Nature in order to discover the utility to ourselves of its various components. We had also to learn the manner and the law in and under which they would disclose their properties to our advantage. We had to find out the make² and shape of things as well as their ingredients and the proportions in which they combine to create other things and the particular laws applicable to them. Our attention was drawn to the phenomena of Nature.³ We were told of their benefit to us and bidden to find out how to manufacture them for ourselves, should need arise. For instance, we have to-day discovered the ingredients of water, and the proportion in which they become combined to produce the form of water. But the Quran tells us to go further and ourselves to do the work of Nature in creating water. The verses which enjoin these various duties demand from us to do *tafaquh*, *tadabbur*, *tafakkur* and *ta'aqqul*. Unfortunately, it is impossible to convey in any other language the precise meanings of these Arabic words. They signify thinking, meditation and contemplation in general. So, at least, they have been rendered by almost all

¹ Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alteration of the night and the day there are signs for men of understanding.

Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: Our Lord! Thou hast not created this in vain! glory be to Thee! save us then from the chastisement of the fire. (3: 189, 190).

² The word, "Khalq," in the text (3-189) literally means *shaping and manufacturing* of things, as well as *combining* of their ingredients in the proportion in which they mix. The verse enjoins upon us the *Tafakkur* of these things which means to find them out.

³ Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day, and the ships that run in the sea with that which profits men, and the water that Allah sends down from the cloud, then gives life with it to the earth after its death and spreads in it all (kinds of) animals, and the changing of the winds and the clouds made subservient between the heaven and the earth, there are signs for a people who understand. (2: 164).

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the translators of the Quran into English, but the words refer to a special and particular kind of knowledge which we have to acquire through contemplation. For example, *tafaqquh* means our knowledge of the features in a thing which enables us to distinguish it from others; under *tadabbur*, we find out the object for which things have been created, and through *tafakkur*, the properties of things and the proportions in which their various ingredients have been combined. *Ta'aqqul* is such a knowledge of things as will enable us to find out how to make them for ourselves. Under these injunctions the early Muslims established laboratories, made scientific researches and inaugurated various branches of science. To facilitate this study and stimulate our interest therein, the Quran announced as follows:—

- (a) The whole world was full of potentialities.¹
- (b) Everything in the universe was for a purpose.²
- (c) They all were for our service, use and benefit.³
- (d) Not a single thing in the whole universe, however insignificant it might be, had been created

¹ And the house that is visited. (52: 4).

Who made the earth a resting-place for you and the *heaven a structure*, and (Who) sends down rain from the cloud then brings forth with it subsistence for you of the fruits; therefore do not set up rivals to Allah while you know. (2: 22.)

² Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: Our Lord! Thou has not created this in vain! glory be to Thee! save us then from the chastisement of the fire; (3: 190).

And He has made subservient to you the sun and the moon pursuing their courses, and He has made subservient to you the night and the day. (14: 33).

³ And the earth—We have spread it forth and made in it firm mountains and caused to grow in it of every suitable thing.

And We have made in it means of subsistence for you and for him for whom you are not the suppliers. (15: 19, 20).

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without its proper¹ use; they have been created to minister to us; and that everything we need is already provided.

- (e) No labour is wasted.²
- (f) Right actions would receive ample reward.³
- (g) Idleness should gain nothing.⁴
- (h) Nothing in the universe is changeable in its Nature.⁵
- (i) The whole world is chained by the law. Everything in it follows⁶ certain laws, and we can turn everything in it to our advantage if we discover and use the said law. The laws of Nature are none other than the Will of the Most High.

¹ Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: Our Lord: Thou hast not created this in vain! glory be to Thee! save us then from the chastisement of the fire. (8: 190).

And He has made subservient to you the sun and the moon pursuing their courses, and He has made subservient to you the night and the day. (14: 33).

² And (as for) those who believe and do good, We will certainly give them abode in the high places in gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein; how good the reward of the workers. (29: 58).

³ Whoever brings a good deed, he shall have ten like it, and whoever brings an evil deed, he shall be recompensed only with the like of it, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly. (6: 161).

And (as for) those who hold fast by the Book and keep up prayer, surely We do not waste the reward of the right-doers. (7: 170).

And thus did We give to Joseph power in the land—he had mastery in it wherever he liked: We send down Our mercy on whom We please, and We do not waste the reward of those who do good. (12: 56).

Surely (as for) those who believe and do good, We do not waste the reward of him who does a good work. (18: 30).

⁴ So when yow are free, strive hard. (94: 7).

⁵ Then set *your* face upright for religion in the right state—the nature made by Allah in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allah's creation; that is the right religion, but most people do not know. (30: 30).

⁶ Is it then other than Allah's religion that they seek (to follow), and to Him submits whoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, and to Him shall they be returned. (8: 82).

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- (j) The laws of Nature are unalterable.¹
- (k) Knowledge² and the discovery of new sciences will enable us to turn these things in Nature to our use.
- (l) Things in Nature stand in a complementary relation to each other.³
- (m) They combine with each other in a fixed proportion to create new things.⁴
- (n) God's blessings are open⁵ to all.
- (o) His ways are shown to him⁶ who seeks after them.
- (p) There are material treasures in the world for us to work upon. The word *Rahman* literally conveys this idea that they are open to all and ready to respond to our needs if properly approached.⁷

¹ (This is Our) course with regard to those of Our apostles whom We sent before you, and you shall not find a change in Our course. (17: 77).

(In) behaving proudly in the land and in planning evil; and the evil plans shall not beset any save the authors of it. Then should they wait for aught except the way of the former people? For you shall not find any alteration in the course of Allah. (35: 43).

² And He gave Adam knowledge of all the things, then presented them to the angels; then He said: Tell Me the names of those if you are right. (2: 31).

And when We said to the angels, *Make obeisance to Adam*, they did obeisance, but *Iblis* (did it not): he refused and he was proud, and he was one of the unbelievers. (2: 34).

Taught man what he knew not. (96: 5).

³ Consider the cloud pouring rain.

And the earth splitting (with plants); (86: 11, 12).

⁴ Who creates, then makes complete.

And Who makes (things) according to a measure, then guides (them to their goal). (87: 2, 3).

⁵ In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

(All) Praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. (1: 1).

⁶ And (as for) those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them in Our ways; and Allah is most surely with the doers of good. (29: 69).

⁷ In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

(All) Praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. (1: 1).

All do We aid these as well as those—out of the bounty of your Lord, and the bounty of your Lord is not confined. (17: 20).

Who created the seven heavens alike; you see no incongruity in the creation of the Beneficent God; then look again, can you see any disorder? (67: 3).

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- (q) Everything is already designed and comes to perfection¹ under the principle of Evolution.
- (r) Man had not to create anything. Everything was already in existence. He had only to strive and use his limbs and he would have an ample reward.²
- (s) Everything is for our good but its mishandling makes it evil.³
- (t) Good or evil even in the least measure brings recompense.⁴
- (u) No one will bear our burden.⁵
- (v) The whole universe is in a measured⁶ order, and we have to observe it if we wish to invent other devices or things for our comfort.
- (w) There are limits and bounds for everything, their trespass entails loss.
- (x) Human nature possesses the best of capabilities,⁷ but we need divine guidance for progress.

¹ He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it (to its goal). (20: 50).

² And that man shall have nothing but what he strives for; And that his striving shall soon be seen; (53: 39, 40).

³ Whatever benefit comes to *you* (O man!), it is from Allah, and whatever misfortune befalls *you*, it is from *yourself*, and We have sent you (O Prophet!) to mankind as an apostle; and Allah is sufficient as a witness. (4: 79).

⁴ And the measuring out on that day will be just; then as for him whose measure (of good deeds) is heavy, those are they who shall be successful.

And as for him whose measure (of good deeds) is light, those are they who have made their souls suffer loss because they disbelieved in Our communications. (7: 8-9).

⁵ Whoever goes aright, for his own soul does he go aright; and whoever goes astray, to its detriment only does he go astray; nor can the bearer of a burden bear the burden of another, nor do We chastise until We raise an apostle. (17: 15).

⁶ And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it, and We do not send it down but in a known measure. (15: 21).

⁷ Certainly We created man in the best make. (95: 4).

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(y) There are pitfalls in our ways.¹

(z) True success only comes to him who exerts to excel others in his occupation of life.²

With such a guide before them, it was not a surprising thing that the early Muslims should have become keenly interested in scientific research. They were induced to explore Nature. They were assured that their labour would be amply repaid. This naturally gave a strong impetus to learning, and the Muslims reaped a goodly harvest in the fields of science. They were the founders of a new civilization. Nay, further, they began to rule Nature, and through it, conquered the world. For centuries they continued supreme, but the riches they thus accumulated, subsequently made them slothful and wrought their ruin. Abuse, excess and self-indulgence shook the structure of their power to its foundations, leaving them an easy prey to others.

The early Muslims, however, bequeathed a vast heritage to their Western successors in the form of that learning which the latter have since pursued under the name of modern science. In fact, the Holy Quran had already so termed it.³

¹ Then We render him the lowest of the low. (95 : 5).

² 1. Consider those that draw forth to the full,

2. And those that go forth briskly,

3. And those that run swiftly,

4. Then those who are foremost going ahead,

5. Then those who regulate the affair, (79 : 1 to 5).

³ And were it not for Allah's grace upon *you* and His mercy, a party of them had certainly designed to bring *you* to perdition, and they do not bring (aught) to perdition but their own souls, and they shall not harm *you* in any way, and Allah has revealed to *you* the Book and the wisdom, and He has taught *you* what *you* did not know, and Allah's grace on *you* is very great. (4 : 119).

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One of the chief factors of modern civilization is Mechanism. The attention of the early Muslims was drawn to mechanism, by the Quran, when they read in it the doctrine of universe ordered to the requirement of all things necessary in a machine; and mechanism is only a system of making things work together in a machine.

The Holy Book also said that the whole universe was in a measured order. Everything in it followed a course which came from the Lord, as already remarked, and it was unchangeable. We are repeatedly told that we must learn the various measures and course that we "may not be inordinate in respect of the measure." The first nine verses of chapter 55—The Beneficent—bring home to us this truth.

It says that we must respect these measures when we have learned what they are. Every created thing has got some good in it. In different measures it serves the needs of different creatures. If in one measure it is utilized by one species, another species has need of it in another way. The measure of water which a camel needs to satisfy his thirst, will kill a man if taken at one time. The principle of measure works not only in the physical plane, but in the moral and spiritual order as well. The same thing becomes good or evil in different forms and measures. What is immorality, in certain circumstances becomes morality, when the conditions are changed. This doctrine set Muslims to work to discover the various branches of mathematics which were active in different regions of Nature as the Book suggested. Algebra, Statics, Conic Sections and other branches of applied mathematics are amongst Muslim discoveries. It was repeatedly told us that water which brings life to the world, was sent

1 And He Who sends down water from the cloud according to a measure, then We raise to life thereby a dead country: even thus shall you be brought forth. (49: 11).

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in a given ' measure and regulated in prescribed measure, and this was a clear hint for the working out of the science of hydrostatics, etc. In fact, the *ilhām* and *wahy*, the Arabic words for revelation, used in the text literally mean hints or suggestions. The knowledge from God comes as a hint to enable the human mind to venture further in finding out things for itself.

I will deal later with other ethics and principles laid down elsewhere in the Quran, but the material I have placed here before my readers will show that the position of men of culture and science, who say that religion has not served the ends of civilization, is absolutely untenable. Let them consider one thing. Muslims were admittedly the founders of modern culture. They enriched the world with their scientific discoveries and produced a unique civilization. It is also an admitted historical fact that there was nothing in pre-Islamic culture to inspire them to scientific research. The Quran came to advocate the acquisition of knowledge for the first time. The Holy Prophet bade his followers to go to far off countries in search of it. Moreover, what I have already stated here is sufficient in itself to create a very deep interest in science. Further, to illustrate my meaning, I may mention that astrology was converted into the useful science of astronomy by Muslim research. Men were informed for the first time by the Quran that the whole solar system worked under a

1 He sends down water from the cloud, then watercourses flow (with water) according to their measure, and the torrent bears along the swelling foam, and from what they melt in the fire for the sake of making ornaments or apparatus arises a scum like it: thus does Allah compare truth and falsehood; then as for the scum, it passes away as a worthless thing; and as for that which profits the people, it carries in the earth; thus does Allah set forth parables. (18: 17).

And We send down water from the cloud according to a measure, then We cause it to settle in the earth, and most surely We are able to carry it away. (28: 18).

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given reckoning¹; that all heavenly bodies floated in some kind of liquid, in their respective spheres,² that they had a course prescribed for their movements, which they had to follow in a given time. They could³ neither overlap nor come in each other's way. They had been created⁴ to guide us and help us to find our way on the earth. Besides, if we were assured that all things of physical nature worked according to certain laws and measures, and that everything in the universe was in a given measure, and that things, though far apart from each other, nevertheless, complemented each other's needs and followed the same law everywhere, it was not difficult for men of science to walk mentally in heavenly bodies with the same facility as they did in the streets of a metropolis. On their charts they could easily work out their course, whether in the air or on or under the sea. These laws would easily enable one to arrive safely at the end of a long and trackless journey. Similarly, this Quranic suggestion that everything in Nature went on in a prescribed course and followed a prescribed law, made them cognizant of the fact that the winds also blow in prescribed ways. It led to the discovery of the meteorological laws which, with the laws of navigation, also studied by the Muslims, saved ships from the buffetings of wind and storm. The Revela-

¹ The Sun and the Moon follow a reckoning. (55 : 5). It should not be forgotten that the word "Ash-Shams" which has been popularly translated as the Sun, also means the solar system. The word, "Al-Qamar" the Moon stands for the satellites in the heavens and the word "As-Sama", meaning height, stands sometimes for the heavenly bodies.

² And He it is Who created the night and the day and the sun and the moon: all (orbs) travel along swiftly in their celestial spheres. (21 : 33).

And a sign to them is that We bear their offspring in the laden ship. (36 : 41).

³ And He it is Who created the night and the day and the sun and the moon: all (orbs) travel along swiftly in their celestial spheres. (21 : 33).

Neither is it allowable to the sun that it should overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day; and all float on in a sphere. (36 : 40).

⁴ And landmarks; and by the stars they find the right way. (16 : 16).

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tion that all rivers had been made to serve man, produced laws of irrigation which, with the suggestion that the earth was capable of retaining water¹ in a given measure, brought so much land under cultivation in the second and third centuries of the Muslim era, in the valleys of the Nile and the Euphrates, that Mesopotamia and Egypt became the granary of the world. Even at the present time, the land under cultivation in Egypt is less than it was then. In short, while St. Paul deprecated the law and called it a curse to humanity, the Quran respected it and made the observance of it our religion, as *Islam* literally means "Obedience to the Law." If the Church religion taught that all beautiful things in Nature should be shunned, since they tended to kill the spirit, the Quran has declared "that these things were not prohibited² for those who were the servants of God." In his zeal to convert people outside the Law, St. Paul had to decry the Law. The semi-philosopher of Tarsus hardly realized that human progress lay only in obedience to the Law. The formal Church had also to assert that sin was innate in human nature, since sin is a breach of the Law. The dictum that man is sinful by nature involves an assumption that he is incapable of observing the Law. It is a most despicable libel on our character to assert that we are

¹ He sends down water from the cloud, then watercourses flow (with water) according to their measure, and the torrent bears along the swelling foam, and from what they melt in the fire for the sake of making ornaments or apparatus arises a scum like it: thus does Allah compare truth and falsehood; then as for the scum, it passes away as a worthless thing; and as for that which profits the people, it tarries in the earth; thus does Allah set forth parables. (18: 17).

And He Who sends down water from the cloud according to a measure, then We raise to life thereby a dead country: even thus shall you be brought forth. (48: 11).

² Say: Who has prohibited the embellishment of Allah which He has brought forth for His servants and the good provisions? Say: These are for the believers in the life of this world, purely (theirs) on the resurrection day; thus do We make the communications clear for a people who know. (7: 32).

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criminal by nature. If sin is innate in our nature, it is an anomaly if legislation exists in Christian land. Parliament and all other legislative bodies are a mere infringement on our liberty. But if it appears, as our experience shows, that most of us are able to observe the Law in all civil matters, how can it be said, as the Church suggests, that we cannot fulfil the Divine Commandments? They are only ten in number. The Muslim world has shown that it does not worship anyone but God. Most of us respect other's property and the womankind of others. Most of us are dutiful to our parents; and similarly the remaining commandments have been implicitly followed by many of us. It is surely then a wrong principle to hold that we are born with a tainted nature, and that we are unable to follow the Law. It was this principle, no doubt, that for centuries retarded all material progress in Christendom, which began to move forward only when the Church dogmas had lost their hold on the human mind.

Briefly, Law is the chief thing in the world and governs the world. The discovery of this principle and our observance of it brought us progress and success; but it was the Quran that first of all taught that obedience to the Law was the Religion from God. All the seven articles of faith in Islam pertained to the Law. They are as follows:—

- (1) *Allah*—God, the Source of all Law.
- (2) *Angels*—The first agents through whom the laws of Nature came to operation.
- (3) *Books*—Revelations that came to man for the promulgation of the Law.
- (4) *The Messengers*—Those through whom the Law was given.

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- (5) *The Last Day*—The day when we shall all be judged according to the Law.
- (6) *The Measures of Evil and Good*—As already prescribed, in other words, Law.
- (7) *The Coming Life*—In which we shall be rewarded according to our observance of the Law.

It thus appears that Law and its observance are the pivot on which turns the whole religion of the Quran. In contradiction to the Church, the Quran announces that man comes into this world with a nature created¹ to observe the Law. Herein lies the chief difference between Christianity and Islam. While the former was bound to produce material retrogression in the human race, the latter's aim is to set man on the right path to progress.

The Holy Book is, moreover, not confined to material progress but brings within its scope every branch of human development. It was sent for the uplift of humanity and could not, therefore, ignore any constituent of human nature. All pre-Islamic religions dealt chiefly with a few doctrines of morality, ignoring other aspects of human nature, and thereby losing their hold on the human mind. If Revelation comes from God to bring out² all that lies within the human frame, it must deal with all sides of humanity. The Holy Book treats of all subjects—morality, spirituality, sociology, economics, politics and æsthetic matters. But the beauty of the Book lies in the fact that it does not separate one thing from the other. It creates a kind of agreement among them all, and works them out into one harmonious whole.

¹ Then set your face upright for religion in the right state—the nature made by Allah in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allah's creation: that is the right religion, but most people do not know. (30: 30).

² These are on a right course from their Lord, and these it is that shall be successful. (2: 5).

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The Book promulgates certain principles that are broad enough to apply equally to every aspect of the question. For instance, it refers to the doctrine of Evolution and its aspects, while elucidating most of its salient truths. The principle of evolution, it should not be forgotten, was taught to the world for the first time in Islam. The Quran began with a chief Divine Attribute—*Rabb-ul-'Alamin*. Though this Attribute, in the first place, means the Creator, the Maintainer and the Nourisher of the various worlds, the word *Rabb* itself is very rich in significance. Its English translation "Lord," which we find in almost all English translations of the Quran, is not an adequate one. It impairs the beauty of the Quran, and the reader loses the particular sense, to convey which the word has been specially used in many places. It also means the Originator of things and their Combiner¹ to create new forms. It means the Law-giver,² Who frames Laws under which He propounds the shapes which things must assume and the ratio and proportion in which various ingredients must combine with each other. He is the

¹ 1. Glorify the name of *your* Lord, the Most High,

2. Who creates, then makes complete,

3. And Who makes (things) according to a measure, then guides (them to their goal). (87: 1 to 3).

² O people! if you are in doubt about the raising, then surely We created you from dust, then from a small life-germ, then from a clot, then from a lump of flesh, complete in make and incomplete, that We may make clear to you; and We cause what We please to say in the wombs till an appointed time, and then We bring you forth as babies, then that you may attain your maturity; and of you is he who is caused to die, and of you is he who is brought back to the worst part of life, so that after having knowledge he does not know anything; and *you see* the earth sterile land, but when We send down on it the water, it stirs and swells and brings forth of every kind a beautiful herbage.

This is because Allah is the Truth and because He gives life to the dead and because He has power over all things.

And because the hour is coming, there is no doubt about it; and because Allah shall raise up those who are in the graves.

And among men there is he who disputes about Allah without knowledge and without guidance and without an illuminating book, (22: 5 to 8).

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Regularizer, *i.e.*, the Lord Who puts things on the way to perfection. He is the Arranger of the different stages through which they have to pass on their way to completion. He sees to the necessary provision for them in their journey. *Rabb* also signifies One Who reposes all the faculties in things at their inception, and then brings them to perfection, to attain which they pass through various stages. (Lane's *Arabic-English Lexicon*). In short, the Arabic word conveys all that is connoted by Evolution, as well as every other thing necessary for its functioning, so that I am almost tempted to translate *Rabb* by Evolutionizer, if I may be allowed to coin such a word. But *Rabb* has got other meanings too, which I will explain later on. There is no word in any other language to convey all the meanings of *Rabb* adequately. I am compelled to keep the original word when I have to use it in these pages.

The Quran dealt with all sides of the principle of Evolution and based thereon its moral and spiritual teachings. It is really most interesting to observe how the Quran traces Evolution from its very beginning. The Quran is not, strictly speaking, a book of science, but since it concerns itself with the development of humanity, it must explain the origin of man and the various stages through which he passed before reaching that of consciousness, and then teach concerning life after death, if there be any, and prepare man for it. The Book, however, explains it all on the basis of the doctrine of evolution, especially when it imparts to the reader the belief in the life after death.

If biology has come to-day to believe in the continuity of life, it is on account of this same doctrine. No species, it says, can become extinct, unless all its potentialities

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become actualized. It passes through many stages, one after the other, to reach the goal. This principle also lays down that a faculty which comes to perfection in any one stage, becomes a nucleus for its further development in the next. If some of our faculties are partially developed in some individuals, while remaining latent in most, it would seem that there ought to be a stage for their fruition in all cases. The Quran also alludes to the same principle when it tells of the life ' to come. Thus in chapter 87, the Book speaks of *Rabb* Who brings all things to perfection by passing them through various forms. When they reach their perfection at a certain stage they die, but only to be re-born again. Then the Book goes on to prove that life after death for the human race is also necessary. In chapter 22 section I, the Book refers to various evolutionary stages through which man has passed before arriving at his present state. There it refers to the vegetable kingdom and therefrom draws a conclusion as to our future existence.

The beauty of the Quran chiefly lies in the richness of the language in which it has been couched. It came in the language of the Hedjaz, and it is admittedly too conservative to allow of any change in the form or meaning of its components. The Quranic words are very rich in their significations. Even the language, we believe, is a revealed one. We will deal with the subject later on. Whatever may be the nature of the case in the matter, the words of the Quran appeared to be a piece of Divine work. Like things in Nature, as explained above, we need not give them new meanings, nor reinterpret them to satisfy new demands of life. Their connotations are wide enough to

' Nay! you prefer the life of this world.

While the hereafter is better and more lasting. (87 : 16, 17).

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denote every new concept. For illustration, I would refer to what I have written about the word *Rabb*. This word, though up till now has been taken to mean Creator, Sustainer and Maintainer, signifies, however, about two dozen of processes which every entity passes through in its course of creation before it reaches its final development. These meanings have not been forced on the word *Rabb*. The lexicons of the language speak of all of them when they give the meanings of the word *Rabb*. I only refer to Lane's *Arabic-English Lexicon* in my support, but the English lexicographer follows *the Táj-ul-Urus* and *the Lisán-ul-Arab*, the two old Arabic lexicons. The words of the Quran, therefore, need no reinterpretation. They may become amplified, but on the material already existing.

EXISTENCE OF GOD.

The subject now needs no elaborate arguments in its support, especially when Science accepts it as a verity. A century before, Biology took the universe as a freak of Nature which in her works, as the then atheistic belief went, observed no order or system. But to-day the rule of the Law has been admitted on all hands. Everything in the world appears to have been enchained by the Law. It follows¹ it implicitly. Nature discloses regularity, precision, punctuality, knowledge, power, command, intellect, preordination, prearrangement, precaution, and several other features that are the possessions of the mind exclusively. In their presence the universe cannot be taken as the outcome of accident. It needs an intelligent Design to precede the process of its creation. The word design sometimes used to bore minds with sceptic tendencies, but it has become now widened in its connota-

¹ Is it then other than Allah's religion that they seek (to follow), and to Him submits whoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, and to Him shall they be returned? (3: 82.)

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tion. It brings within it so many facts and figures recently discovered by Science that disbelief in God would amount to ignorance. But how wonderful of the Holy Qur-ân to anticipate, in its pages, all that Science advances to substantiate her belief in Divine Existence. It in itself is an extra-cogent reason, firstly, to believe in an Omniscient Being and, secondly, as to the Divine Origin of the Book itself.

The Holy Book, though teeming with reasons on the subject, adopts also another novel but laconic method to explain its verities. It gives us a list of Divine Attributes which in their signification also imply the best of logic needed to prove all Qur-ânic tenets. Here I would give some such Holy Names as work everywhere in Nature, and also strongly refer to the Existence of the Mind who created the universe. I have already explained *Ar-Rabb*. This includes :—

Al-Badî—He who creates out of nothing. *Al-Bârî*—He who originates things with various faculties in them. *Al-Bâtîn*—He who knows latent and hidden properties of things. *Az-Zâhir*—He who brings thing to manifestation. *Al-Wâjîd*—He who finds and knows the whereabouts of the required things. *Al-Jâmi'*—The collector of things in the place they are needed. *Al-Jabbâr*, *Al-Qahhâr*—He who subjects others to His Will and makes them to work according to His wishes to their good. *Al-Khâliq*—He who combines things in a given proportion to create new things. He fixes the said proportion first. *Ar-Rashîd*—He who puts things on the right path. *Al-Hâdî*—He who guides further progress on right lines. *Ar-Razzâq*—The nourisher. *Ar-Rehman*—He who prearranges the needful. *Al-Mohsi*—He who comprehends (every necessity). *Al-Bâsit*—He who expands. *Al-Qâbir*—He who contracts. *Al-Mâni*—He who guards

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things against the encroachment of other destroying factor. *Al-Moqit*—The controller. *Ar-Raqib*—He who watches every movement. *Al-Akhir*—He who brings things to their final development.

These Attributes refer to various functions of the Mind that are observed even in the creation of a single thing.

The Holy Qur-án did a real service to Scientific research through Divine Attributes. It facilitated investigation. These names supply us with a sure data, and in the light of their significance we proceed in our research work as the Qur-án itself suggests when it asks us to study Nature. In Chapter 3, Verse 190, it clearly says that in studying things in the universe we have to keep these Attributes of God before our mind. The Muslim scientists put the above-mentioned names on their chart as a guide and took no time to discover the laws working in Nature for creation.

I read a beautiful episode in the writings of a Moorish Divine called Mohy-ud-Din ibn Arabi. He once was asked as to the colour which Divine Light assumed when the universe became emanated.

“Black was the colour” was the reply. He also gave reasons for this conclusion. If light was the material out of which the heavens and the earth were made, it must be of black hue ; because the colour was in consonance with the Attribute *Al-Bâtin*, which means “He Who is Hidden and Unseen.” There was a time preceding Creation when everything was hidden. No sooner the said light assumed other colours than it came to work under another Divine Attribute called *Az-Zâhir*—the Manifest. It was a minute's thinking on the part of Mohy-ud-Din to arrive at the conclusion. But Science took ages to find out that a dense and impenetrable substance popularly called ether stands at the commencement of every thing.

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It is not surprising now to find out the reason for the adversity which has blighted the economic condition of the present-day Muslims. They, in the words of the Qur-án, turned their ' backs upon its teachings. They have but to thank their own inadvertence and their neglect of the Qur-án. Let them study the conditions precedent to progress as laid down in the Qur-án, they are the same as have crowned modern scientific efforts with success ; and if they find that they are those which I propose to set out in this book, then they must rue the day when they became regardless of their sacred Scripture. Now a word to Modern Culture. If the world made no progress in material civilization till the appearance of Islam, and if their then success owed its very existence to certain truths revealed in the Qur-án, how can they minimize the importance of Religion ? On the other hand, I would ask the rest of the religious world to ponder over these facts. Is it worth while to follow any religious system in these days of Culture and Progress, if their respective revelations do not invite our attention to the essential necessary things in life ?

' And the Apostle cried out : O my Lord ! surely my people have treated this Qur-án as a forsaken thing. (25 : 30).

CHAPTER II.

QURAN: A BOOK FROM GOD.

MIRACULOUS BEAUTIES OF THE QURAN.

I have shown the necessity of a Divine Revelation to man, as well as for a Book like the Qur-ân. ¹ But it is also necessary to give reasons which will persuade the reader of these pages to accept the Holy Qur-ân as a Book from God. Its Revealer felt the necessity Himself, as I find at the very outset.¹ The Book after speaking of two classes of people, firstly, those² who will benefit by it, and, secondly, those³ who will not care to receive light from its guidance, makes this very important statement.

¹ And if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it and call on your helpers (or leaders) besides Allah if you are truthful. (2: 23).

² I am Allah, the best Knower.

This Book, there is no doubt in it, is guide to those who guard (against evil).

Those who believe in the unseen and keep up prayer and spend out of what We have given them:

“And who believe in that which has been revealed to you and that which was revealed before you, and they are sure of the hereafter.

These are on a right course from their Lord, and these it is that shall be successful.” (2: 1-5).

³ Surely those who disbelieve, it being alike to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, will not believe.

Allah has set a seal upon their hearing, and there is a great chastisement for them.

And there are some people who say: We believe in Allah and the last day; and they are not at all believers.

They desire to deceive Allah and those who believe, and they deceive only themselves and they do not perceive.

There is a disease in their hearts, so Allah added to their disease, and they shall have a painful chastisement because they lied.

And when it is said to them, Do not make mischief in the land, they say: We are but peace-makers.

Now surely they themselves are the mischief-makers, but they do not perceive.

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It says definitely that the world ' with all its resources has been created for the use and benefit of the human race. But inasmuch as they need a proper guidance in the form of a book, that Book should come from the Lord, and to prove that it contains a Message from Him it should possess a quality that will distinguish it from books written by men. It is the uniqueness of things in Nature that gives them the character of being from God. Similarly we read in Chapter 2 : 23 :—

“And if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it and call on your helpers, beside Allah, if you are truthful.”

A similar challenge is contained in Chapter 10 : 38, and in Chapter 11 : 13, where the doubters are invited to produce ten chapters like it, while in Chapter 17 : 88, the whole of mankind is declared to be unable to produce a Book like the Qur-ân.

And when it is said to them, Believe as the people believe, they say : Shall we believe as the fools believe? Now surely they themselves are the fools, but they do not know.

And when they meet those who believe, they say : We believe ; and when they are alone with their devils, they say : Surely we were only mocking.

Allah shall pay them back their mockery, and He leaves them alone in their inordinacy, blindly wandering on.

These are they who buy error for the right direction, so their bargain shall bring no gain, nor are they the followers of the right direction.

Their parable is like the parable of one who kindled a fire, but when it had illumined all around him, Allah took away their light, and left them in utter darkness—they do not see : Deaf, dumb, (and) blind, so that they will not turn back.

Or like abundant rain (pouring forth) from the cloud in which is utter darkness and thunder and lightning ; they put their fingers into their ears because of the thunder peal, for fear of death, and Allah encompasses the unbelievers.

The lightning almost takes away their sight ; whenever it shines on them they walk in it, and when it becomes dark to them they stand still ; and if Allah had pleased He would certainly have taken away their hearing and their sight ; surely Allah has power over all things.—(6-20).

‘ O men ! serve your Lord Who created you and those before you so that you may guard (against evil).

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Qur'an: a Miracle.—The Sacred Book has various miraculous features about it which should be borne in mind. It has been admittedly the most successful of all sacred books in its mission. It came first to a people verging on the borders of animality and raised them from thence to the acme of civilization within the shortest period recorded in history for such a transformation. It changed the destinies of the world by bringing the greater portion of it under its healthy influence, while setting the remainder on the right path to civilization. The Book still remains a source of inspiration to the human race, inculcating the noblest of ideals—Monotheism, Universalism and Democracy. Though it gives the true solutions to all the important problems of humanity and provides for every contingency of life, yet it is wonderfully laconic. It condenses the whole of its teaching into 6,666 verses.

Style.—The Qur-án is a miracle for its diction and style. We can sometimes read volumes in a chapter, chapters in a verse, and in a single word perceive a veritable treasure of knowledge, yet it is in no wise dogmatic. It produces logical reasons for each one of its tenets. It appeals to things in Nature for confirmation of its truths. Thus, its opening words are marvellously pregnant with sublime significance. They are as follows :—

“All praise (*hamd*) is for Allah, the *Rabb* (The Creator and Maintainer) of the worlds.” This sentence is not only an epitome of various teachings, but it contains the purest of logic to support its assertions. It speaks of the Deity, Whom it calls the *Rabb*.

Science observed many things in Nature before it believed in the existence of the First Intelligent Cause. It saw the whole of Nature bound with the chains of laws which, though

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apparently conflicting in some cases, yet worked in harmony as if under a single controlling hand. Science observed Design and Evoluton worked out under Intellect, Knowledge and Power. This led biology to give up its earlier atheistical beliefs and accept God as the Mover of the whole machine; but it is marvellous to find that the Qur-ân here anticipates Science. The Book refers to the above-mentioned verities among many other things, when speaking of God : but surely it is the wonder of wonders that the very meaning of the word "Rabb" should also cover them. The phrase "The Creator of the Worlds" is preceded by the word "Al-Hamd," which first means praise, eulogy and approbation; and, secondly, our submission to the ways of the Creator; for by saying "hamd" we express our willingness to submit to His laws, and the literal interpretation of Islam is "submission." Technically it means Obedience to the Laws of God. Thus the Qur-ânic sentence, besides expressing our intelligent belief in the existence of the Deity, refers to our creed of life, that is to say, our religion—the religion of obedience and commandment. If God has been pleased to base His work of creation on laws, as the word "Rabb" denotes, our very existence and its proper evolution would command us to observe these laws. We cannot live, even for a moment, without them. Yet, even so, we do not know all the necessary laws and, therefore, Revelation must come from God to enlighten us.

Every Prophet of God, as the Qur-ân says, came with one and the same message. They all taught us to obey Allah or *Rabb*. If Allah is the Source of all laws, and *Rabb* promulgates the ways of creation and sustenance, we cannot remain indifferent to such laws. This is the religion of which the Qur-ân speaks.

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The sentence under discussion, "All praise (or submission) is for Allah, the Creator of the Worlds," refers also to the nature of the religion we have to observe. Science and the Qur-án alike speak of various worlds into which we have passed from the beginning up to the present stage of sojourn, which is the final stage of our physical growth. Here we stand at the threshold of a "New Creation." ¹ It has been, up to now, the world of matter, now we enter into that of consciousness. We have found the means of subsistence in every sphere into which we have entered during the journey, and, in it, have become prepared for our progress in the sphere immediately following it. We naturally look to our Creator for nourishment in this world as well as for our preparation for the next, if any. We are on the mental plane now, and need intellectual food; we need knowledge of the ways of progress on the mental and spiritual planes, since they are the chief constituents of the present and the coming world; we need a revelation from God. Thus a single sentence of our words—*Al-Hamdolilláh-i-Rabbil-'Alameen*—All submission to *Rabb* of the Worlds—conveys a world of truth in it.

Here I have spoken of only one aspect of the Qur-ánic style. I purposely avoid what the Arabic scholars have written in volumes in explaining the various other miraculous beauties of its diction and style as it is beyond the appreciation of an average reader. It needs attainment of a very high scholarly knowledge of the language itself to understand it.

Prophecies in the Qur-án—Like everything in creation the Qur-án has baffled all human efforts to produce another

¹ Then We made the life-germ a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made (in) the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We caused it to grow into another creation, so blessed be Allah, the best of the creators. (23 : 14).

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book like this in matters of diction and style. But there are other proofs which show that the Book could not emanate from a human brain. Prophecies and their fulfilment, for example, have been spoken of as proof of Divine Messengership in the Book of Deuteronomy. But the prophecy should not be mere guesswork, nor couched in oracular terms of mystery. It should be made at a time and under circumstances that make its occurrence an impossibility. Such prophecies I find in the Qur-ân :—

(1) *The Qurân will retain its purity.*—It appeared among a most illiterate people. The art of writing was then in its infancy throughout the whole world. Human memory was the only custodian of ancient history, and this affected the purity of such records as there were. For this very same reason almost all Sacred Literature could not remain in its original text. The Qur-ân,¹ at this period of history, claimed that it would remain free from all corruptions; and to-day we find the prophecy fulfilled up to the hilt. It was made in the clearest and most authoritative terms, and it could only have come from One Who possessed the knowledge of coming events and had also the power to create things that would make His words a reality.

(2) *Islam shall succeed.*—Muhammad, though of noble extraction among the Meccans, was, immediately after his claims to Prophethood, completely deserted by almost all his kith and kin. Most of his uncles and cousins became his mortal enemies, since they were the custodians of the great temple of idols. They owed their income and all honour to idolatry, while the new Prophet was raised to eradicate that form of worship from the earth. He had to work against heavy odds; not only did he meet discouragement, but also

¹ Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its guardian. (15: 9).

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every hardship and persecution, and these of a most terrible nature. Every effort was made to put an end to his mission. He had but few followers, but they were all subjected to every kind of oppression and tyranny. They left their homes for good, as did the Prophet, after 13 years' persecution at a juncture when the enemy decided to murder him and had besieged his house for that purpose, but he escaped. The Qur-ān spoke many a time of the unique success¹ that will come to the Prophet during the life-time. The prophecy was repeated, especially on those occasions when the hostility of his enemies became more and more embittered. It was prophesied that the whole of Arabia would embrace Islam, and that the enemies of the Prophet would be at his feet,² and that the Faith would extend to the four corners of the world with its tenets prevailing over³ the doctrines of all

¹ "And soon will your Lord give you so that you shall be well pleased."

"(All) praise is due to Allah who revealed the Book to His servant and did not make in it any crookedness."

"Rightly directing, that he might give warning of severe punishment from Him and give good news to the believers who do good that they shall have a goodly reward."

"Staying in it for ever."

"Surely We have given you abundance of good." (93: 5, 18: 1-3, 108: 1.)

² "But what is the matter with those who disbelieve that they hasten on around you."

"On the right hand and on the left, in sundry parties."

"Does every man of them desire that he should be made to enter the garden of bliss?"

"By no means! Surely We have created them of what they know." (70: 36-39.)

"On that day they shall follow the inviter, there is no crookedness in him and the voices shall be low before the Beneficent God so that you shall not hear aught but a soft sound." (20: 108).

³ "He it is Who sent His Apostle with the guidance and the true religion, that He may make it overcome the religions, all of them, though the polytheists may be averse. (61: 9.)

"He it is who sent His Apostle with the guidance and the true religion that He may make it prevail over all the religions; and Allah is enough for a witness. (48: 28.)

"And an announcement from Allah and His Apostle to the people on the day of the greater pilgrimage that Allah and His Apostle are free from liability to the idolaters; therefore if you repent, it will be better for if you turn back, then know that you will not weaken Allah; and announce painful chastisement to those who disbelieve." (9: 3.)

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other religions. The last portion of the prophecy is in the course of its fulfilment to-day, when Monotheism, Universalism and Democracy with various other Qur-ànic tenets vigorously preached for the first time in that Holy Book, are becoming increasingly popular.

(3) *Total Defeat of the Meccans.*—I have just referred to the flight of the Prophet to Medina. He settled there, but he had hardly time to arrange his affairs in his new place of residence when he heard of his enemy's march against him. With a small band of three hundred and thirteen men, most of whom were inexperienced and under age, he left Medina. At a distance of thirty miles from that city the Muslims saw more than one thousand veteran soldiers, the flowers of Meccan bravery, marching against them. It was a disheartening scene. The Prophet in his tent prostrated himself in prayer to the Almighty, when Abu-Bakr, the first Caliph, came to him and reminded him of the prophetic words that had been revealed years before at Mecca. In fact, that very prophecy had become a household word with every Muslim before the battle took place. Abu-Bakr left the tent and recited the prophetic words to every one with whom he met. It is a matter for surprise, perhaps, that the small Muslim band, though facing certain death, were in the best of spirits on this occasion. They believed that that mighty force had come to meet its own destruction in fulfilment of the prophecy.¹

There is nothing in history to equal the event at Badr—the scene of the conflict. Though but a small scuffle between one thousand men on one side and some three hundred on the other, it produced far-reaching results in the history of the world, as Gibbon says : “ It changed the destinies of the

¹ “ Soon shall the hosts be routed, and they shall turn (their) backs.” (54 : 45).

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whole human race. Not only did it save Islam, but it enabled the Faith to rule the world in the future." The Qur-án has spoken of it as a great witness to the truth of Islam.¹ It has also been mentioned clearly in the Old Testament.²

(4) *The Final Fall of the Enemy*.—I read of another prophecy in chapter xxxviii of the Qur-án which became revealed years before the occurrence of which it speaks. The chapter refers to the time when opposition to Islam was approaching its height; the immediate prospects of the Prophet were of the gloomiest description. At this juncture he received the following words from the Most High: "A mighty host of the Allies shall be here put to flight." It was the fourth year of the Hijra when the enemies of the Prophet made their last attempt to uproot Islam. Almost all the tribes of Arabia banded together and marched on Medina. The town was besieged and trenches were dug by the followers of the Prophet to defend it. His force was insignificant in number and powerless before the mighty host which was approaching, but instead of losing heart they rejoiced greatly on account of the said prophecy. The time for its fulfilment, they thought, had arrived. The Holy Book speaks thus of the event: "And when the believers saw the Allies, they said, 'This is what Allah and His Apostle spoke the truth'"; and it served but to increase their faith. The Allies refer to the prophecy and the battle is called the Battle of the Allies. The result was the total

¹ "Have you not considered those who are given a portion of the Book? They are invited to the Book of Allah that it might decide between them, then a part of them turn back and they withdraw." (8: 22.)

"And know that whatever thing you acquire in war, a fifth of it is for Allah and for the Apostle and for the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, if you believe in Allah and in that which We revealed to Our servant, on the day of distinction, the day on which the two parties met; and Allah has power over all things. (8: 41.)

² Book of Isaiah.

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overthrow of the Meccans and the fulfilment of the mighty prophecy.

(5) *The Defeat of the Persians by the Romans.*—The struggle between these two nations was of long standing. It began in A.C. 602. When Chosroes the Second, of Persia, set out to avenge the death of Maurice, who had been murdered by Phocas, his armies ravaged Syria and Asia Minor, and in 608 advanced as far as Chalcedon. In 613 and 614, Damascus and Jerusalem were taken by the General Shahabbaraz, and the Holy Cross was carried away in triumph. Soon after, even Egypt was subdued, the Romans being able to offer but little resistance, torn as they were by internal dissensions and hard pressed by Avars and Slavs.—(*Encyclopædia Britannica*, Article Chosroes II.)

The Meccans rejoiced at the news of the Roman defeat, because of their ancient friendship with the Persians. But the following revelation came to the Holy Prophet at the very time when the news of the Roman defeat arrived, "*I am Allah, the Best Knower. The Romans are vanquished in a near land, and they, after being vanquished, shall overcome within a few years. Allah's is the command before and after ; And on that day the believers shall rejoice.*"¹

The revelation made in 616 contained two different prophecies, which I have italicized in the above quotation. One was concerned with the overthrow of the Persians by the Romans, who had become utterly powerless by that time, and the other foretold the fall and defeat of the Meccans at the hands of but a few Muslims. The time given in the text for the fulfilment of the prophecy is "*Bid'aa*," which literally means a period from three to nine years. The

¹ "*Within a few years. Allah's is the command before and after ; and on that day the believers shall rejoice.*" (30 : 4).

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prophecy became, at the time of its revelation, the subject of heated discussion between Muslims and non-Muslims at Mecca ; so much so that Abu-Jehl, the arch-enemy of Islam, wagered seventy camels with Abu-Bakr as to the issue of the prophecy. The events foretold were at that time a sheer impossibility. They could not be a political forecast, seeing that they determined such highly improbable events with exactness and precision, especially when " the Greeks were so distressed that there appeared little likelihood of their being able to retrieve their fortune," as Palmer rightly points out, when commenting on these verses in his English Translation of the Qur-ân. In the year following the revelation, " the Persians proceeded to lay siege to Constantinople itself," which showed the hopeless condition of the Romans at that time.

However, in A.C. 624, Heraclius advanced into northern Media. He destroyed the great fire-temple of Gondzak and routed a large Persian army. The Romans returned victorious, leaving the Persians totally defeated. It was about this time that a handful of persecuted Muslims vanquished the powerful forces of Mecca at Badr, where Abu-Jehl who had wagered against the fulfilment of the prophecy, was among slain. A foolish critic might, perhaps, describe the revelation as a chance or coincidence, the defeat of a mighty people like the Persians and the Meccans by those of fallen state (the Romans and the Muslims) ; but how can he explain the synchronizing of the two events of quite different characters, especially when the happenings at Badr were sequel to the flight of the Prophet from Mecca ? No one could have even dreamed of the flight at the time of the prophecy, and what is then to be said of its occurrence in the year 623 of the Christian Era, when the Meccans one year after it would

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pursue the flying Prophet and fall at Badr in 624, the year after the Persian defeat by the Romans? It is a most curious event in the history of the world, especially when we find that the event at Badr occurred one year after the flight, as was foretold in the prophecy of the "Burden of Arab" in the Old Testament as given in the Book of Isiah, which clearly says that the power of *Kedar*—the ancestors of the Meccans—would fall just one year after the flight; and so it occurred.

(6) *The Recovery of Pharaoh's drowned body.*—The drowning of Pharaoh with his people in the river Nile was a well-known biblical story at the time of the revelation of the Qur-án. But the old record said that the body of Pharaoh was never found and the river was the grave; but the Qur-án contradicted the biblical narrative and gave a striking new version of the episode in the following words: "But We will this day deliver thee with thy body that thou mayest be a sign to those after thee." The Christian critics of the Qur-án declared this Qur-ánic statement to be a fabrication, seeing that the Book of Exodus gave quite a different story. But the last century discovered the body of Rameses, the Pharaoh of Moses, preserved among the mummies of Egypt. The body must have been cast ashore and then embalmed by the Egyptians. No one in the world knew of it, but the Qur-án revealed it some two thousand years after the event, and I may say that the world took thirteen hundred years more to confirm the truth spoken of in the Qur-ánic pages.

(7) *The exalted position of its scribes.*—The Book also said that it would see among its scribes men of very high rank. The prophecy became fulfilled even in this respect, when the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, and many other kings, wrote the Qur-án with their own hands.

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(8) *Scientific Predictions.*—(a) By these predictions I mean the relations of certain scientific truths, that have recently been acknowledged, but were mentioned by the Qur-ân at a time when no one in the world knew of them, and would have nothing to do with sciences. For example, very little was known of biology in those days, but the Qur-ân, in the clearest terms, speaks of water as the producer of life.¹ The Book is not a treatise on Science. It merely refers to certain phenomena in Nature for the purpose of elucidating its principle underlying Nature. Since it comes from the Omniscient Lord, it cannot, like the Book of Genesis, impart wrong knowledge.

(b) It is, moreover, a recent discovery that everything in the universe has got its mate or supplement for procreative purposes, but the Qur-ân disclosed the secret in 51 : 49 in the clearest terms.

(c) I have spoken elsewhere of the earth and its formation, but geology has to-day confirmed, word for word, everything revealed by the Qur-ân as to the earth and its several stages of growth from a fiery² mass.

(d) The Qur-ân speaks of the life-germ—the seminal fluid—as the essence of earthly matter. It speaks³ of the various stages through which it passes when in a woman's womb before it evolves into human shape, and the Qur-ânic statement has been verified to-day by physiology.

¹ "Do not those who disbelieve see that the heavens and the earth were closed up, but We have opened them; and We have made of water everything living; will they not then believe?" (21 : 30.)

² "Then He directed Himself to the heaven and it is a vapour, so He said to it and to the earth; come both, willingly or unwillingly. They both said : we come willingly. (41 : 11.)

³ "And certainly We created man of an extract of clay."

"Then We made him a small life-germ in a firm resting-place.

"Then We made the life-germ a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made (in) the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We caused it to grow into another creation, so blessed be Allah, the best of the creators. (23 : 12-14).

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(e) The art of navigation was discovered and brought to a high pitch of perfection by early Muslims. Though everyone before Islam knew well enough that the blowing of the winds did aid the course of the ship on the sea, the Qur-ân disclosed a wonderful truth, so helpful to navigation that the winds might be made subservient to human will, and the mighty ocean itself would become the servant of man as soon as he acquired proper knowledge.¹

(f) The world knew something of the heavens in early days, but the Qur-ân increased immensely our knowledge of the subject. It inspired the early Muslims to rescue astronomy from the clutches of astrology and place it on a strictly scientific² basis, leading to many valuable discoveries. The Qur-ân not only asserted that the luminaries moved in their respective orbits, but it revealed that each orbit or sphere consisted of a sort of liquid³ matter in which it floated; this again is a recent discovery.

(g) No one knew of the roundness of the earth in pre-Islamic days, but the Qur-ân clearly hints at this when it speaks of numberless Easts and Wests. No one, in those days, could imagine a thing like that, as seeing that they thought of one East and one West. Even certain religious scriptures give ridiculous explanations of the setting of the sun in the West and its rising again from the East. The present division of the hemisphere into East and

¹ "Allah is He Who created the heavens and the earth and sent down water from the clouds, then brought forth with it fruits as a sustenance for you, and He has made the ships subservient to you, that they might run their course in the sea by His command, and He has made the rivers subservient to you."

"And He has made subservient to you the Sun and the Moon pursuing their course, and He has made subservient to you the night and the day." (14 : 32, 33.)

² "And the Sun runs on to a term appointed for it; that is the ordinance of the Mighty, the Knowing." (36 : 38).

³ Neither is it allowance to the Sun that it should overtake the Moon, nor can the night outstrip the day; and all float on in a sphere." (36 : 40).

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the West is a man-made barrier. But as in the course of the progress of Islam it had to assume a certain political importance, the Qur-ân spoke of many Easts and many Wests.¹ But if the earth be round, every inch of it is a new East and a new West. If, for instance, "B" is distant two hundred miles from "A" which, let us suppose, is situated to the West of "A," the sun will rise there some three minutes before it will rise at "B." Similarly, it will set at "B" three minutes after it has set at "A." If, therefore, we take places on the hemisphere two hundred miles apart as rising and setting places for the sun, there will be thousands of Easts and Wests on the earth, thus confirming the truth of the Qur-ân.

The Book may be man's handiwork, but if it is, its author must be a person of transcendental mental calibre, as well as a law-giver, a nation-builder, and a moralist of the loftiest ideals and one fully conversant with the various "ologies," etc., that have been discovered in modern days: geology, botany, biology, physiology, astronomy, geography, etc. This proves that the revelation of the Qur-ân is from an All-Knowing Being.

Freedom from variations.—Another feature of the Book which has always struck me as a very strong proof of its Divine origin is its freedom from variations. It makes these claims for itself.² It should not be forgotten that the Book that acquired its present shape under Divine Revelation, spread over a period of twenty-three years. Though such a period is long enough to bring changes into the life of every man, yet Muhammad passed it in exceptional and

¹ "But nay! I call to witness the Lord of the Easts and the Wests that we are certainly able. (70 : 40).

² Do they not then mediate on the Qurân? And if it were from any other than Allah, they would have found in it many a discrepancy." (4 : 82).

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varied adventurous circumstances. His life was full of vicissitudes. Beginning life as an honourable trader, he almost at once became the preacher of a new religion. He was forsaken and persecuted in every possible manner. He fled for his life, and then reappeared as a victorious soldier; he conquered his enemies in many battles and reduced them to complete subjection. Indigence and affluence, adversity and prosperity, he experienced in their most extreme form, and the Holy Book acquired its revelation under circumstances such as these. Had it been a figment of the Prophet's mind his environment must have affected the Book in every way, but in it there is no sign of this. Again, the language of an author, as well as his diction and style, offers aspects of contrast as regards his own writing at different periods of his life. His early efforts show a certain rawness. Efficiency and ability come to him gradually, but his style is apt to dwindle in its beauty when he approaches old age. We find nothing of this kind in the Qur-án. It is a most wonderful exception to the universal rule. Even the earliest revelations contained therein are eloquent in the highest degree, and mastery of the art of writing is kept in the background. If Muhammad had contrived to keep the whole Book from beginning to end a secret, had continued unremittingly to improve it during his lifetime, and then had published it at the end of his life, one might be able to understand the unique and unchangeable character of the Book. But the case is otherwise altogether. Every portion of it was, as it were, broadcast soon after it was revealed. Again, what we find at the beginning of the revelation gets confirmation at the end. The first chapter of the Qur-án is one of the earliest. It was described by the Prophet as the essence of the whole Book. The Qur-án says the same.

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But we find this truth borne out when the Qur-án became complete. Everything spoken of in the opening chapter was explained at suitable length in the course of the Book. Whatever principles of life were given in the early Meccan days of the revelation were preserved and explained later on. No new principle was ever inculcated to accommodate any unexpected change, such as often beset the life of the Prophet.

The claim of the Qur-án, that it would baffle human efforts to produce its equal, is based on absolute truth. A Book completed in twenty-three years, dealing with every aspect of human life, and yet remaining free from any kind of discrepancy or even a slight variation, is in itself a miracle.

SOME BEAUTIES EXCLUSIVE TO THE QUR-AN.

A New Conception of Religion.—Al-Qur-án came with a new conception of Religion. It gave a new meaning to every article of faith. According to it Religion was neither ceremonialism nor a collection of some moral precepts. It was a code which enabled one to lead a happy life.

Though the Book like other Scriptures makes God and His worship as one of its chief themes, yet it speaks of Him for the benefit of man who has been declared as His vicegerent on the Earth. We needed some guidance to reach the exalted position, and God Himself appeared as our prototype in the Book. He needed no devotion from us. It was conceded that God was transcendental and stood beyond our imagination,¹ but He was given some such Attributes in the

¹ Allah is He besides Whom there is no God, the Everliving, the Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist; slumber does not overtake Him nor sleep; whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; Who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission? He knows what is before them and they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge except what He pleases. His knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of them both tires Him not, and He is the Most High, the Great." (2: 255).

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Qur-án as could come within our comprehension and imitation. Some say that the God of Qur-án possessed human morals. It was therefore a man and not God who pictured Him in the Qur-án. But this contention is absurd on its very face. The Holy Names mentioned in the Qur-an cover Attributes like generosity, compassion, intellect and others as worked in Nature long before man ever came into existence. It could not therefore be a man who could fashion the Qur-anic God by himself, but it was the Almighty who made him after His own image, and revealed to him His such characters, so that he may follow Him and- act as His vicegerent.

The Book gives God three special features that would make up human character. Firstly, God is the God of virtue. Everything in the universe is not without its evil side. The same may be said of these Attributes in their abstract form. Love, compassion and power, for instance, have got their use and abuse. The Qur-án, therefore, calls these Divine Attributes as Excellent Names of God. It suggests that these Attributes when spoken as of God should be taken in their good sense and not in the wrong one. Some people think that it would be inconsistent with the Omnipotence of the Lord if He should be deemed to be incapable of committing a wrong. The idea gave rise to peculiar Attributes of God with all their absurdities in ancient India. It revolted the Buddhistic sense of decency and led some of them either to disbelieve totally in God or in His Attributes. They took him as an impersonal God. The Qur-án, however, remedied this defect. The Book secondly describes God as the God of Law. With all His Omnipotence He has been represented in the Qur-án as the first observant of His own Law. All the Holy Names in the Qur-án are the

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source of various laws which work in Nature. The Holy Book wants man to follow his Lord in this respect. For this reason it names Islam as His religion, which means Obedience to Law. God in the third place has been described by the Book as the God of actions who remains busy all the time. He neither feels tired¹ nor needs any rest. He wants man to do the same. He no doubt has created the night² for his rest, but only to refresh him for further exertion.

This conception naturally gives a new import to Muslim devotion. The Qur-ân speaks of five methods of Divine worship named as the five Pillars of Islam:—Formula of faith, prayers, fasting, almsgiving and pilgrimage to Mecca. The first and the last three consist of such actions as are necessary for the elevation and general good of human race. The second kind of worship, popularly called prayer, consists no doubt of some formalities, but they in themselves are of no consequence. They index our mental attitude and remind us of our submission to God. Physical prostration and bending stand for the same towards the Lord. Muslims also recite few sacred words in the prayer, but they all remind them of their daily duties. Praise and thanksgiving is a part of Muslim worship, but both have got special meanings. *Hamd*, the equivalent of praise in the Qur-ânic text, also means submission, which in reality is the true praise. *Shukr* which in the Qur-ân stands for thanksgiving means the bringing of a thing to its proper use. According to the Qur-ân lip-gratitudes are of no avail. Real thanksgiving lies in using various gifts of God in the right way. The Qur-ân promises increase of Divine blessing if we properly utilise those already given. This is thanksgiving in Islam.

¹ “(All) Praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.” (1 : 1)

² “And when your Lord made it known. If you are grateful, I would certainly give to you more, and if you are ungrateful, My chastisement is truly severe.” (14 : 7).

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Prayer in general does not mean begging more favours from God. The Muslims have been ordered to pray to their God for showing them the right path, to achieve the thing they wish to possess. Firstly, they have to make all possible exertions at their command for obtaining the object and then to pray to the Lord to show them some efficacious means to accomplish it.

The Qur-án also teaches certain beliefs, but they are all consistent with reason and can be translated into good actions. The Book never mentions such beliefs that have no practical bearing on our life or demand mutilation of intelligence for their acceptance.

Comprehensiveness of the Holy Qur-án.—This conception of religion needed a Book that should bring all that man required within its scope. The whole world is the scene of human activities, and contains things beyond our comprehension, although they have been created exclusively for our use. Besides, we alone, out of the whole creation, have special tastes and appetites for them. To make, however, the things in nature purposive a special and skilled knowledge is necessary. The Qur-án declares that the world was full of beauty and utility. It invites our attention to them and opens new avenues for our activities. If the Qur-án had not given these directions and made it clear then the Divine design in creating things would have remained unaccomplished.

Modern civilization no doubt engages us in various pursuits, but it was only after the Muslims, who had first been inspired by the Holy Qur-án, had pointed out the true line of action that anything practical was rendered possible. That is why we find that the things in Nature had not been utilised until the advent of Islam.

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Man himself is the universe in miniature. His mind stands correlated with everything in the world. There is nothing in it which cannot be utilised by him if his mind is properly cultivated. We have to explore our own mind and work out its capabilities before we can put the things of Nature to their proper use. But our mind remained a barren land until the Qur-ân was revealed. Again our nature has got various aspects,—spiritual, physical, moral, social, economic, and so forth. They all have to be developed. Ethics, poetry, art and cultivation of various other sciences all come within the scope of human mind and contribute to our pleasure. Our mind is just like a cultivable land that could be converted into a prosperous garden with various avenues and orchard with trees full of fruits and flowers. The Qur-ân has compared our nature with such a garden in the story of Adam. A Book from God like the Qur-ân should also invite our attention to such mental cultivation. It should also look to our æsthetic tastes.

Like animals our consciousness is a collection of passions, but they, in human frame, are capable of being sublimated into high morality and spirituality. A Book from God should provide for all of them. It is not right to crush them, for fear that they may also lead to evil. Divine guidance should come to control them and divert them to virtue. It should bring every human instinct under its salubrious teaching. In fact a Book from God cannot be complete unless its teachings take account of everything in the universe including human nature. The Book of Islam meets this demand, though we find other Divine scriptures wanting in this respect. They must have brought all the required knowledge, but time played a havoc with their purity.

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Universal Book.—Al-Qur-ân is the Book that came to preach a cosmopolitan religion. Every Book before it was sent to a particular country. They worshipped a tribal god and slammed the door of light in the face of all other nations. Previous teachers have been very strict in this respect. The Jewish Patriarchs plumed themselves on being the people chosen for His message and for this reason they proudly called themselves Sons of God. If the old Hindus would dub all others “Rakshas” and “Malechh”—the race of devils—Jesus would call the Gentiles and other non-Israelites dogs and swines. He would not even throw them the children’s food. Islam came, on the other hand, with a universal dispensation. It took the whole world as its diocese, and preached its truths to the whole human race. It preached universalism. It declared that all mankind belong to the same family and are one race. The Holy Qur-ân demolished all artificial barriers which separated one nation from another. It welded black and white into one harmonious whole, and established universal brotherhood throughout the whole world. The world is on its way to Universalism, but it has much to learn from the Qur-ân before the colour and country prejudice is eradicated and the poor negro is no more lynched by the civilized white. The Christian Church may pray to “Our Father which art in Heaven” at the top of its voice, but its followers in the West do not regard those in the East as the sons of the same Father, though they belong to the same faith. Islam is the only religion that gives precepts as well as example for true Universalism and the fraternity of the whole human race. It lays down principles that compel stiff-necked people to respect others as their equals.

1 “And people are not but a single nation.” (19: 19).

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All Religions from God.—For example the Book says that all religions came from the same divine source. No religion can claim to bring a universal dispensation unless it believes in the universal Divine Dispensation of God in religious matters from the beginning. If all of us are His creatures, He will not be guilty of partiality in sending His light to all people. As Universal Father, He cannot choose any race for His special blessings to the exclusion of others. On the other hand, every nation on Earth claims to have its own creed and faith as sent to it by God. A religion with a universal message is therefore bound to have regard for others' faiths. They may have deviated from the original path. The Book in their hands might have lost its purity; but to say that other nations had no guidance from God amounts to an insult to Universal Providence. It is absurd, it is unnatural. Moreover, the whole world will never gather under one universal flag. It has never done so up to now, nor will it ever do so in the future. There ought to be some *via media* between the jarring elements in the world of religion that may create a good understanding and prevent them from disturbing universal peace.

This *via media* gospel, then, came to the world through the Qur-ân, which declared that no nation on God's earth had been left without light from 'above. If equality in man is the basic principle of the democracy so much desired by all, how can we believe in it, if we do not believe in the universal revelation? All nations, says the Qur-ân, have had their prophets from God, but their followers became divided among themselves; they quarrelled with one another and forsook the right course which was given simultaneously and on almost identical lines to all the units of the human race.

¹ ".....And there is not a people but a warner has gone among them."
(35: 24).

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This wholesome teaching should go far to kill the spirit of religious hostility latent in us. A Muslim, under this teaching of the Qur-ān, believes in the Divine origin of every great religion of the world. He has been ordered to make no ' distinction between the various prophets of the world, and to pay equal allegiance to all of them. If we cannot live without some religion, nor all of us come together under the same flag (and difference in religion has hitherto created discord and disturbance everywhere), the Qur-ānic gospel is clearly needed. It alone can preserve harmony and peace under these circumstances. Sons of the same father live separately from each other; they may become immersed in their respective lives, but they are not always antagonistic to each other. We do need some principle of fraternity which we may observe in the religious sphere, and this has been given to us by the last Book. Under its teachings we must regard all Teachers of Religion as our own fathers, and members of different religions as our brethren under one universal dispensation. We may differ from each other in some of our doctrines, but as long as we look on the various Teachers as equally entitled to our respect, and believe that they taught one and the same truth originally, there is every possibility of reconciliation among men. If we hold that our brethren of the other faiths have only made some departure from the old truth, we may amicably compare our respective briefs in the matter of belief, and come to a right conclusion. We may work together for some common belief, and join with each other on a common platform. Those who believe in God should unite their forces and present a solid front against atheism, the arch-enemy of all religions; and this unity of purpose would, as the Holy Book teaches, tend to a further coalition.

¹ ".....We make no difference between any of his apostles...." (2: 285).

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It is a truism that all religions have drunk from the Divine Fountain, since every one is, as it were, entitled to guidance from God. All Divine Messengers brought and preached the same truth. But the fact did not occur to any prophet before Islam, and I may safely say that Muhammad has a *supreme claim to prophethood for preaching*, if only for preaching this single truth. God had to raise up someone to proclaim this gospel of universal peace, and the blessed duty fell on the shoulders of the Arabian Prophet.

Broad-mindedness in the Qur-ân.—In fact no civilization, religion or philosophy before Islam ever struck such a noble note of liberal-mindedness as did the Qur-ân in giving the message of Universalism to the whole human race. It was revealed at a time when it was needed the most for the world was standing at the threshold of bringing the various units into contact with one another. All races were coming in closer touch, and a gospel of general unification was needed. The Qur-ân proclaimed it, and it was so successful in its mission that within a decade it could boldly assert to a nucleus of few thousand Muslims at Medina :

“And remember the favour of Allah on you when you were enemies, then He united your hearts. So by His favour you became brethren ; and you were on the brink of a pit of fire, then He saved you from it.” (8 : 102).

The verse eloquently pictures the condition of Arabia of those days, but within a quarter of a century after this announcement the Qur-ân was able to expel the demon of hatred and antagonism from its frontiers.

Then it carried its message of universal peace to the other corners of the world and, within a few centuries, successfully established universal brotherhood in the large portion of the globe. But this progress was retarded about one thousand years after by the appearance of the so-called

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European Civilization. If the Muslim Civilization was based on the Qur-ānic principle, to wit—'only those will survive in the world who profit others,' (13 : 17) its rival propounded a new principle, *i. e.*, the survival of the fittest, which entailed a keen struggle for existence and self-determination. This principle would no doubt have proved useful to the society had it been adopted in the right way. But unfortunately it was interpreted to mean that the life and strength of a nation depended on the weakness and death of the other, and thus the maxim of self-determination was coupled in the West with self-assertiveness. All these principles began to revolve on the pivot of selfishness of a most sordid nature. It was sure to breed hatred and enmity of the type which has now overtaken the whole world. Not only one nation has arisen against the other, but all are ready to cut each other's throat; even people, though they may belong to the same country, are at daggers drawn with each other if they chance to belong to different persuasions. Antagonism rules the whole world. If it owed its existence to ignorance in ancient times, Western culture is responsible for it in modern times. The last Great War proved that it was culture, and not religion, that played havoc with humanity and worked out an unparalleled devastation and vandalism in the world. But the end is not yet in sight. The Western nations are standing, to quote the Qur-ān, on the brink of fire, and a bigger conflagration may overtake the world at any moment. The same belligerent spirit has taken root even in the subject races in the form of civil disobedience. The peace of the world has become ruthlessly disturbed by European Civilization only within two hundred years. Even its best advocates are now tired of its baneful efforts. Their aversion to it has appeared in the form of Russian Civilization. But no State

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compulsion could produce any healthy result for long unless human hearts become purged of all narrow-mindedness and gave birth to a largeness of soul in their dealings with others. We undoubtedly differ from each other in creed, class and colour. But we have now been brought together, we cannot pursue the policy of aggressors, nor can we afford to efface others from the surface of the earth. The policy has been tried by stronger nations, but it has hopelessly failed.

We do need a creed of life like that preached in the Qur-ân that teaches us to worship the Lord of all nations Who maintains and nourishes every one without any partiality and in pursuance we should do the same. As already mentioned, Arabia presented the worst example of tribal animosity at the advent of Islam, but the world all over is breathing the same malicious spirit. Islam brought the real panacea to remedy the poison. Had not the world been dazzled with the pomp and grandeur of the Western culture which for a time eclipsed Islam, the world till now had been freed of all racial prejudices. It, however, has now become undeceived, and will, it is hoped, grow wiser enough to see the realities.

All people may not come under one flag as I said, but the critical situation can be saved if we all exhibit that liberal-mindedness which we find in the pages of the Holy Qur-ân. Let the savants and sages of different persuasions study the following tenets of the Book and see for themselves if they would not find the needed haven of salvation in these troubled waters if the world cultivated Qur-ânic spirit.

I have already spoken of some of the broadest tenets that would crush down all exclusiveness. But I repeat them briefly in the series of many other similar precepts that make universalism a reality. The Book declares that the whole

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humanity is a single nation.¹ They are members of God's family, and if they assume different names after the countries of their origin it is only for purposes² of identification. It does not give them any distinction. The Book brushes aside all such distinctions as being accidental and makes virtue³ the only sign of greatness, and declares that it is not exclusive to any one, but is open to all. The Book came at the right time,⁴ when human race, like these days, was divided into cults and creeds. It declared that all religions in their origin came from the same⁵ Divine source.⁶ God sent His messengers⁷ to guide every class. They all came from Him⁸ but the people differed from each other afterwards.⁹ The Book strongly condemned the practice of making distinction between a prophet and a prophet,¹⁰ and asked the Muslims to

¹ "And people are not but a single nation...." (10: 19).

² "O you men! surely we have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other..." (49: 13).

³ "Surely the most honourable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful (of his duty); surely Allah is knowing Aware." (49: 13).

⁴ "Surely We have sent you with the truth as a bearer of good news and as a warner....." (2: 119).

"O people! surely the Apostle has come to you with the truth from your Lord, wherefore believe, (it shall be) good for you; and if you disbelieve, then surely whatever is in the heavens and the earth is Allah's; and Allah is knowing, wide." (4: 170).

⁵ "(All) people are a single nation; so Allah raised Prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He revealed with them the book with truth..." (2: 213).

⁶ "And certainly We raised in every nation an Apostle saying; serve Allah and shun the devil..." (16: 36).

⁷ "And there is not a people but a warner has gone among them." (35: 24).

⁸ "By Allah, most certainly We sent (apostles) to nations before you, but the devil made their deeds fair-seeming to them, so he is their guardian to-day, and they shall have a painful chastisement." (16: 63).

⁹ "And surely this your community is one community and I am your Lord, therefore be careful (of your duty) to Me."

"But they cut off their affair among themselves into portions, each party rejoicing in that which is with them." (23: 52, 53.)

¹⁰ "We make no difference between any of His Apostles..." (2: 285.)

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follow also that which had been revealed before them.¹ They had to accept all the prophets of every country.

There is a great diversity in some of the tenets of different faiths, but the Book declares that they all agree in the principles of guidance, and the Prophet² was ordered to follow them. If people differed in ritualistic part of their faith it was not of much consequence³. It was given to suit different temperaments under different local conditions.⁴ People should vie with each other in good actions. No other Book has brought the truth to its followers in such clear words as the Qur-ân did in the following verse:—

“It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteousness is this that one should believe in Allah and the last day and the angels and the Book and the prophets, and give away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars and for (the emancipation of) the captives, and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate; and the performers of their promise when they make a promise, and the patient in distress and affliction and in time of conflict—these are they who are true (to themselves), and these are they who guard (against evil).” (2 : 177).

¹ “O you who believe! believe in Allah and His Apostle and the Book which He revealed before; and who ever disbelieves in Allah and His Angels and His Apostles and the last day, he indeed strays off into a remote error.” (4 : 136).

² “To every nation We appointed arts of devotion which they observe, wherefore they should not dispute with you about the matter and call to your Lord; most surely you are on a right way.” (22 : 67).

³ “And every one has a direction to which he turns (himself), therefore hasten to (do) good works; wherever you are, Allah will bring you all together; surely Allah has power over all things.” (2 : 148).

⁴ “And We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, verifying what is before it of the Book and a guardian over it, therefore judge between then by what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their law desires (to turn away) from the truth that has come to you; for every one of you did we appoint a law and a way...” (5 : 48).

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The Qur-an not only prohibits speaking ill of others' deities,¹ but it admits goodness² in other faiths. It does not establish any new³ faith, but comes rather to confirm⁴ the old truths, and invites other people to observe their respective good tents.⁵ It repeatedly preaches that belief in God and obedience to Him is the⁶ only one eternal faith. It invites others to observe the same and shun differences.⁷

1 "And do not abuse those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest exceeding the limits they should abuse Allah out of ignorance. Thus have We made fair-seeing to every people their deeds; then to their Lord shall be their return, so He will inform them of what they did." (6: 109).

2 "Then We gave the Book for an inheritance to those whom We chose from among our servants; but of them is he who makes his soul to suffer a loss, and of them is he who takes a middle course, and of them is he who is foremost in deeds of goodness by Allah's permission; this is the great excellance." (35: 32).

3 "Surely We have revealed to you as We revealed to Noah and the Prophets after him, and We revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac, Jacob and the tribes and Jedus and job and Jonah and Aoron and Solomon, and We gave to David a scripture." (4: 163).

"He has made plain to you of the religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you, and that which We enjoined upon Abraham and Mons and Jesus, that keep to obedience and be not divided therein; hard to the unbelieves is that which you call them to; Allah chooses for Himself whom He pleases, and guides to Himself him who turns (to Him) frequently." (42: 13).

4 "And We sent after them in their footsteps Jesus son of Mary, verifying what was before him of the Torah, and We gave him the Gospel, in which was guidance and light, and verifying what was before it of the Torah, and a guidance and an admonition for those who guard (against evil). (5: 46).

"He has revealed to you the Book with truth, verifying that which is before it, and He revealed the Torah and the Gospel afore time, guidance for the people, and He sent the Distinction. Surely they who disbelieve in the communications of Allah—they shall have a severe chastisement; and Allah is Mighty, the Lord of retribution." (3: 3).

5 "Say: O followers of the Book! you follow no good till you keep up the Torah and the Gospel and that which is revealed to you from your Lord; and surely that which had been revealed to you from your Lord shall make many of them increase in inordinacy and unbelief; grieve not therefore for the unbelieving people." (5: 68).

6 "Then set your face upright for religion in the right state—the nature made by Allah in which He has made man; there is no altering of Allah's creation, that is the right religion, but most people do not know." (30: 30).

7 "Of those who divided their religion and became parties, every seat rejoicing in what they had with them." (30: 32).

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How boldly it asserts :—

“ Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the last day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve.” (2 : 62).

It lays down here another dictum and wipes out the evil of religious differences. It gives a gospel of universal salvation to every one of any persuasion so long as he observes the three principles mentioned in the above passage. They are the basic doctrines of the religion technically called Islam.

Though the verse has been breathing the noblest spirit of unity for the last thirteen hundred years yet ignorance and prejudice blame the Qur-án for narrow-minded teachings. God is the source of all good actions, and our belief in the Hereafter can only actuate them. Hence the two beliefs are a necessary adjunct of good action. Can any one with his belief in the existence of God take exception to such a religion ?

In order to uproot every prejudice the God of the Qur-án was pleased to give this faith the name of Islam '—obedience to Divine Laws. Like Christians, Budhists or Hindus He would not name it after any country or person, as it would excite racial prejudices. The Book would not concern with any name, people may be Christians² or Jews by birth, but it did not count much in the eye of the Lord. He would

¹ “ This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion.” (5 : 3.)

² “ And the jews say, The Christians do not follow anything (good), and Christians say, The jews do not follow anything (good), while they recite the (same) Book. Even thus say those who have not knowledge, like to what they say ; so Allah shall judge between them on the day of resurrection in what they differ.” (2 : 113).

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call His votaries as Muslims '—those who submit to His Laws. Could a more appropriate name be given to a good citizen who respects good laws because they are laws of God! The following verse needs special consideration :—

“Receive the baptism of Allah, and who is better than Allah in baptizing? and Him do we serve.

“Say: Do you dispute with us about Allah, and He is our Lord and your Lord, and we shall have our deeds, and you shall have your deeds and we are sincere to Him.” (2 : 138 & 139).

This is the gospel of universal peace. If good actions are the only salt of life how can any one take exception to it? It shows a largeness of soul not found anywhere else except in Islam.

As to difference of tenets the Book forbids us against forcing our beliefs on others, we must preach them in a graceful manner and resort to reasoning in order to decide their respective merits. This principle if accepted will banish the whole trouble from mankind on the score of religion.

Arabic, the language of Religion.—The Book was couched in a language that is still living, and it remained proof against every change, while other languages in the world have been transformed completely. Words have lost their original shape and meaning, and either new meanings have been given to them or they have become generalized.

I may safely remark that no one of the languages of the world, excepting that of the Hedjaz, is spoken now in

1 “And strive hard in (the way of) Allah, (such) a striving as is due to Him; He has chosen you and has not laid upon you any hardship in religion; the faith of your father Abraham; He named you Muslims before and in this, that the Apostle may be a bearer of witness to you, and you may be bearers of witness to the people; therefore keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and hold fast by Allah; He is your Guardian; how excellent the Guardian and how excellent the Helper! (22 : 78).

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the form in which it existed at the time of the Holy Prophet. Even if other sacred Books had come to us in their original purity, we could hardly give to their teachings the precise meaning which attached to them in the days of their Revelation. In short, we cannot read the mind of their teachers on account of the change of language. But the Qur-ân was given to us in a language which is still living and has remained unchanged and is unchangeable, and for this reason its message can be understood even to-day as conveying the same exact purport, expressed at the time of the first delivery. Arabic can, therefore, claim to be the only language for a Religion from God, since it does not change with the centuries.

Every religion speaks of certain verities, but the words used to signify them do not express the concept intended to be conveyed. "Good and Evil," for example, are the chief themes in every religion, but the words used for them do not in themselves express the whole idea. Nothing in itself is either good or bad. If one form of use makes it beneficial, the other form of its use makes it pernicious. We have to *choose* the former and reject the latter. The Arabic words for them are eloquent enough to say. "*Khair*," the equivalent of 'good,' literally means things elected, while '*Sharr*,' the word for 'evil,' means anything to be rejected.

Richness of meaning.—Again, almost all the words in the Arabic language possess such a wealth of meaning as cannot be found in any other tongue,—a fact which renders valuable service to religion in explaining its truths. The words used in the Qur-ân are too eloquent to need any commentary on its tenets. For example, I refer to sin. Every religion gives some particular significance to it, but the word it uses to convey the particular idea is seldom adequate like Arabic word. All words like *Junah*, '*Ism*, '*Isyân*, '*Adwân*,

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etc., used in the Qur-án to convey sin literally mean leaving one's original position and turning aside from it. Righteousness, as it were, has appointed a certain place wherein we commit sin. But when we return to it, we repent. No repentance is acceptable unless we return to righteousness as the Qur-án says.¹ The word used in the Qur-án for repentance is *taubah*, which literally means 'return.' Similarly, every Qur-ánic doctrine becomes clear to us when we study the word used for it in the text; while in the case of other scriptures, we have to sit at the feet of commentators and theologians, who give us their own conception of the various things taught in their respective religions.

Revealed nature of the Qur-ánic Language.—These observations lead me to say a few words about the revealed nature of the language of Hedjaz—the language in which the last Book of God was sent down. The final Revelation could not possibly be expressed in a language of human creation. A finite mind could not make words sufficiently wide in their connotations to convey an Infinite Mind. The language of the Hedjaz may or may not be a revealed one, but it cannot be denied that it is the proper vehicle to convey the message coming from the Divine Mind. We may safely assert that the said language possesses all the characteristics that are commonly found in things in nature. Thus things in nature are unchangeable in their make. They are

¹ "Except those who repent after that and amend, then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (3 : 88).

"And as for the two who are guilty of indecency from among you, give them both a slight punishment; then if they repent and amend, turn aside from them; surely Allah is oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful.

"Repentance with Allah is only for those who do evil in ignorance, then turn (to Allah) soon, so these it is to whom Allah turns (mercifully), and Allah is ever Knowing, Wise.

"And repentance is not for those who go on doing evil deeds, until when death comes to one of them, he says: surely now I repent; nor (for) those who die while they are unbelievers. These are they for whom We have prepared a painful chastisement. (4 : 16, 17, 18.)"

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extraordinarily rich in their inherent qualities which meet all our needs. So is the case with the Qur-ānic words in their significations. I have discussed this subject when dealing with the word "*Rabb*."

Philosophy in Qur-ānic words.—But the thing that is most significant in the language and which goes a long way to prove it to be a revealed one, is the philosophy in its component words. Every word contains in it a reason for which it has been selected and does convey a particular idea. The subject is very interesting, and needs a lengthy discussion which the space here does not allow. I have written a book in vernacular entitled "Ummu-'l-Ālsina," the mother of languages. I have given in that book various words to explain the above mentioned beauty. Here I would give only one or two words to substantiate my remarks.

Men or women are as ancient as humanity. There ought to be words to convey these ideas at the very inception of our society. Like all other languages Arabic has got two words "*Rajul*" and "*Nisa*" conveying the idea of man and woman. The two words are deep in their significance. Here I would refer to such meanings as are very characteristic in their nature. Men by nature are meant for hard work in life. They have to expose themselves to work which is not meant for females, because the former alone can stand it. For reasons of health we must keep the vital heat within our system. We need some non-conducting material over our body. On the other hand, if the requirements of man demand hardness of constitution in him, the comeliness and beauty, the necessary assets of a female, requires on the contrary softness of body. Keeping these in view, Divine Economy granted hairy body to men and gave enough of fat to female system, because both materials are the best of non-

conductors. Besides, hairy body would have affected female beauty while fat makes body soft. It is admitted that nothing is more non-conducting than hairs. Hairs on body are a visible phenomenon observable by every naked eye, but no one ere long knew that the female body did possess a fatty coat next to their skin. It is for this reason that women are less sensitive to cold than men. These are recent discoveries, but the language of Hedjaz has chosen two words given above that do convey these truths. If the word "Rajul" means hard as well as *hairy*, the word "Nisà" equivalent of woman means soft and *fatty*. The said words do belong to the most initial society. I may say that they are the first words after mother and father that must be formulated for the respective purposes. How can an incipient mind in his natural condition could coin such words so rich and eloquent in their meanings to be discovered afterwards. The words must come from the All-knowing Mind. The said two words do signify other meanings which give various characteristics of men and women. My book "Ummu'l-Alsina" gives dozens of other words as illustration of the principle. It is surprising to find some special philosophy or significance hidden in some words. For instance, "Khifa" and "Khauf" come from the same consonants with a change of vowels, one means something concealed and the other means fear. The cause of fear is always the concealed nature of the things feared of. The two correlative ideas have been expressed by the same consonants with the change of vowels.

These things, besides many other things which the language of the Hedjaz possesses, show that the language must have come from God.

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The finality of the Divine Message.—If the Revelation from the Almighty came to set man on the right path, it cannot vary in its teachings if it comes again. It may come piecemeal, according to the receptivity of the people to whom it is addressed, but it must reiterate its truths, and one day the final message will come. If there cannot be more than one straight line between two points, the Revelation that claims to point out the straight¹ path for human guidance, can also claim to be final. The last Book did not come to contradict former Revelations, but to confirm² them. It preached the same religion as that given to Noah³ and the rest of the prophets. But the Book's task was to complete⁴ it, and herein lies its finality. The ways of God are admittedly infinite, and our knowledge of them can never be complete. It will remain on its increase. But the right way of contemplating them could be shown once and for all. If knowledge is the only water of life, and God the fountain thereof, the sooner the way to the fountain is shown to humanity the better. So it was from the beginning. I would even go so far as to say that if the former Revelations had remained in their original form and could claim authenticity, the last Book of God would have been of a different character. But almost all the former Books have either disappeared or have suffered from the human tampering. The Divine Will

¹ Those are on a right course from their Lord, and these it is that shall be successful." (2 : 5).

² "And We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, verifying what is before it of the Book and a guardian over it, therefore judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their low desires (to turn away) from the truth that has come to you ; for every one of you did We appoint a law and a way..... (5 : 48).

³ "Surely We have revealed to you as We revealed to Noah and the Prophets after him, and We revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes and Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron and Solomon, and We gave to David a scripture. (4 : 163).

⁴ "This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as religion." (5 : 3).

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had to be announced once and for all at the advent of the Holy Prophet, and that announcement was final and free from corruption or interpolation. This appeals to me as a clinching argument against the attitude of other religions when they hesitate in accepting the Qur-ân as a message from the Lord. If the Revelation that came from God to their ancestors had lost its genuine character, a further Revelation must come to us ; we have the same claim to Divine guidance as our forefathers had ; either the source of knowledge should keep the old message in the form in which He gave it in the olden days or He must send a new one. Such is His method always. The whole of Nature bears conclusive testimony to this truth. Whenever ' anything necessary for our growth in the universe disappears or is lost, Providence renews it at once, and if He is always observing this principle for our physical subsistence, He will surely do the same for our spiritual nourishment, seeing that the soul is infinitely more valuable than the body. If bygone generations were given some knowledge for guidance from God, we have the same claim to His Providence. There would have come another Book from God for us if the Holy Qur-ân had gone the way of the former Books.

It is also very interesting to note that the Qur-ân appeared at a time when the world was in dire need of Divine guidance, and every nation looked at the moment for the appearance of the Prophet ; seeing that all the old religions had lost their influence by reason of the corruption that had crept into their pristine teaching. The prophetic eye of the former Messengers foresaw that their teachings would suffer in purity, and that coming generations of their followers

¹ " Whatever communication We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or like it. Do you not know that Allah has power over all things ? " (2 : 106).

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would naturally need some new Revelation from Above. So all the Sacred Teachers spoke of the coming Messenger. No one among them declared that his message was the last. If Moses prophesied that God would raise up another prophet after him with fiery law in his hands, we¹ cannot look for the fulfilment of the prophecy in the person of Jesus, since he brought no new laws, nor did he depart from the old code in any way. He himself was looking for the Spirit² of Truth, who was to come to give the whole Truth. Ignorance or prejudice would endeavour to discover the fulfilment of the words of Jesus in the so-called appearance of the Holy Ghost at the Day of Pentecost, when the Miracle³ of the Tongues occurred. But it is not conclusive. Jesus admittedly could not himself give the whole⁴ truth. He looked for one who was to come to do so. The Church that passes under his name cannot claim to do the same, as she has failed to add even a scrap of knowledge to that which the world possessed at the departure of the Nazarene. Moreover, the promised Prophet was to bring the fiery law to complete the old one, as Jesus hoped, but the official Church has totally dispensed with it. The Bible has also prophesied that God would arise from Sinai and appear at Seir, but would shine fully at Mount Paran.⁵ If Sinai and Seir refer to the Mosaic and Nazarene dispensations, Mount Paran is not found in any other country except Arabia, Mecca being located in its valley. But the Bible is not the only Scripture that speaks of the coming Prophet. Almost all other great Prophets of God, including Krishna and Buddha have joyously referred to the illustrious advent of the last Great Prophet.

¹ Dent. (18 : 18).

² St. John. (1 : 16-17, 16 : 7).

³ Acts. (2 : 1-3).

⁴ St. John. (16 : 12-13).

⁵ Dent. (33 : 3).

CHAPTER III.

REASON AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS.

Logic.—The Word of God makes another departure in the Qur-ân from the rest of the revealed Books when giving its message to the world. It is neither dogmatic nor assertive. If it inculcates any principle or contradicts any doctrine obtaining elsewhere, it puts forth logical reasons to substantiate its assertions. The other Books do not do so. The Qur-ân sets forth its tenets in a way that appeal most readily to our intelligence: "Reason" ¹ being one of the names which the Qur-ân takes to itself. We may be assertive in imparting wisdom and knowledge to the younger generation, but when they reach the age of discretion nothing except logic and reason would be acceptable to them. Compulsion is of no avail when logic begins to rule the world. The Qur-ân, therefore, says the same when it lays down a golden principle in the matter of preaching religion. It says:—"There is no compulsion in religion, truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error." ² If the way has been clearly reasoned out and found to be the correct one, there would be no point in resorting to compulsion for its acceptance. The Book repeatedly lays stress upon this principle. We often read verses like the following: "The truth is from your *Rabb*, and so let him who pleases believe and let him who pleases disbelieve." The logic of the principle lies in the

¹ "O people! surely there has come to you manifest proof from your Lord and We have sent to you clear light." (4 : 175).

² "There is no compulsion in religion; truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error....." (2 : 256).

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word *Rabb*. *Ar-Rabb* is He who sustains and brings all our capabilities to perfection. He lays down rules for their perfection. Every one of us, therefore, must be interested in His ways; we must look to them as they come from our Nourisher and Evolver. Why, then, should a person be compelled to accept them if they are not such? He should be left to his own judgment. The verses speak of the true test by which every teaching should be tried. We have to see if a Book that claims to possess guidance for us contains anything that will nourish our faculties and bring them to their full growth. The Qur-ân must also be put to the same test before it is accepted.

Logic for every doctrine.—There are many doctrines commonly taught by every faith, but no other revealed Book proves their validity on grounds of logic and reason, while the Qur-ân frankly appeals to our reason before it asks us to accept them. For example, all sacred scriptures speak of God, Angels, Revelation, Messengership, the Hereafter and the Resurrection. They ask us to accept these as truths, but modern education in our days has given rise to scepticism because of the lack of any intelligent proof in pre-Islamic scriptures. The Muslims have escaped this pitfall. If education has prompted our reason to fight against our faith, the Qur-an has made use of the same weapon against unbelief. I have in this book given some of the Qur-anic reasons proving the existence of God. I have also enumerated some of the grounds on which the Qur-ân speaks of the necessity of some guidance from the Lord. I summarise here few more from the same Book :—

(A). Everything has been shown its way to perfection. All its properties come out when it follows the course chalked out for it by its Creator. This rule applies everywhere in the

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physical world ; and it could hardly be otherwise in matters of consciousness. But we bring no knowledge from the mother's womb¹ wherewith to cultivate our minds. Knowledge must come to us from Above.

(B). All things are surrounded by materials which are beneficial or deleterious to their growth, but there is something that urges them to assimilate the former and reject the latter. Physically, our body does the same, but mentally we have no such guiding knowledge. It must come from without, and it did come in the shape of Divine Revelation and brought us out of darkness to light.² -

(C). The Holy Book often refers to birds that remain constrained in air. They receive their nourishment from something that exists in the atmosphere.³ It shows that the Providence has looked to the nourishment of every creature according to its environments ; and as human mind had to live upon knowledge, which must come from the Universal Providence, hence the necessity for revelation.

Resurrection.—Perhaps the child in man had passed its infancy and reached the age of discretion some 1,350 years ago, as the trend of Revealed Literature had become changed. Only two thousand years back when the Nazarene philosopher was asked for proof of the life after death⁴ by the Sadducees, Jesus replied that they often spoke of Abraham and Jacob as their ancestors : the patriarchs must be living, otherwise they could not be alluded to. The reply might

¹ " And Allah has brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers—you did not know anything—and He gave you the hearing and the sight and the hearts that you may give thanks." (16 : 78).

² " I am Allah the Seeing (this is) a Book which We have revealed to you that you may bring forth men, by their Lord's permission, from utter darkness into light to the way of the Mighty, the Praised one." (14 : 1).

³ " So they not see the birds, constrained in the middle of the sky? None withholdeth them but Allah ; most surely there are signs in this for a people who believe." (16 : 79).

⁴ Mark. (12 : 16).

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have satisfied his inquirers, but the modern Sadducees would not see any logic in it.

No religion can live if its followers do not believe in the life to come. In fact, it is the function of religion to inform us concerning our future existence and warn us against anything which may mar our happiness therein ; for the future is but a shadow of the present.' Nevertheless, inas-much as it belongs to the unseen world, no sooner does credulity give way to reason than our belief in religion generally becomes weakened, if that particular one to which we belong does not give us some logical grounds for it. We belong to an intellectual order. We cannot believe in anything which does not come within the scope of our perception or experience or is unable to stand the test of logic. A religion, therefore, should give us good reasons for our belief in the life after death, if it demands of us that we should lead a good life. Unfortunately, the Formal Church could not show any intelligent reason in support of its tenets. It was wont, instead, to harp continually on the dogma of faith, thereby naturally losing its hold on the Western mind as liberal education became more prevalent. Religion, in general, also began to decay at the same time, but Spiritualism stepped in to save the situation. It revived Occidental faith in the life beyond the grave, but the cult is not without grave drawbacks. On the one hand, it believes in our accountability for our present actions in a future life, but, on the other, it does not give us any good code of life, like that in the Qur-án, whereby we may make our future a brilliant one. Besides, Spiritualists are now taken up with what may be termed Spiritism. They are more concerned with receiving messages from departed spirits than in discovering means for securing

¹ "And who ever is blind in this, he shall (also) be blind in the here-after, and more erring from the way." (17: 72.)

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happiness in the world to come. Curiosity has got the better of utility, and to be a medium has now become a business, and swindlers have discredited their mission. Moreover, the trivial nature of these messages, as recently admitted by Sir Oliver Lodge in his address to the Modernist Churchmen at the Cambridge Conference, is detracting much from the impression originally created by the cult. The return of departed spirits is a truth not unknown to Muslim divines, but they neither make a living out of it nor trumpet it abroad.

We need some solid arguments to substantiate our belief in the Last Day. Though all religions speak of it, they do not go beyond making mere assertions with little or no explanations. The Qur-án, however, is an exception. As with all its verities, so with this, it applies the soundest of Logic to prove both the Resurrection and all that it entails. The Holy Book throws such a vivid light on the subject as to make it a reality beheld by mortal eye. It starts with the principle of evolution, and makes resurrection a necessary link of progress in our journey. It gives other reasons too. It refers to the same phenomenon of resurrection which takes place every year in the vegetable world. Autumn comes to strip the trees of their raiment, foliage, fruits and flowers, which may soon become rotten and reduced to their elements. They in turn become scattered and diffused in the atmosphere. But the coming spring brings them back and gathers them again into the same organism which they left in the preceding autumn. The Qur-án gives a vivid description of this process and then concludes most emphatically: "Thus is the rising."¹

¹ "A sustenance for the servants, and we give life thereby to a dead land; thus is the rising." (50: 11.)

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The composition of elements and their decomposition followed by recomposition is a daily phenomenon and a decisive proof of resurrection. But the mind of the sceptic fails to see in it any proof of the return of an individuality. Our body may be resolved into its disintegrated elements and composed into a new shape, but it does not show that our personality has also been restored. The contention, to me, seems hardly tenable. It evinces ignorance of the fact that all different species in the vegetable kingdom are from the same substance and yet their original elements become individually specialized into various plants, trees, etc. As the man, the dog and the bird come from the same material—Nature giving personal individuality to each species—so trees and plants bearing different kinds of fruits and flowers, though they be of the same material and receive the same water for sustenance (13 : 4), yet each fruit differs from the other in taste, form and species. The Holy Book refers to this very operation of Nature and then says : “ And if you would wonder, then wondrous is their saying, what ! when we are dust, shall we certainly be a new creation ? ” (13 : 5). It is not, in fact, the substance but the difference in “ magnitude and measure ” (13 : 8) observed by Nature in combining the elements that creates variety of fruit and grain, while keeping their identity. The Qur-an gives another illustration of resurrection which is even more direct in its bearing. It refers to the phenomenon of fire when it burns (36 : 79, 80). Fire is the same sunshine which was stored up in trees when they first sprang up from the earth. For this reason they have been called “ bottled sunshine ” in scientific phraseology. The Sun sends down its heat and light in the form of sunshine which penetrates into the earth. There it becomes mixed with other materials and gives rise to the vegetable kingdom. But sunshine is like a spirit in

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the tree, the rest of the ingredients of which act as its clothing. The trees give us logs of wood for heating purposes. But what we call burning of fire is only the separation of the sunshine from the other constituents—carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and the like. All these come out of wood in the same proportions in which they combine to make a tree. Sunshine likewise retains its former proportions, but it emerges from the log in a form nearer to its original source. The Sun when seen at dawn, say, on a winter morning in the mountains, is of the same colour as fire. But the sunshine in its transit, from the big luminary, loses much of its heat and colour by the time it reaches the earth. It, however, restores them in their original condition when it forsakes its vegetable body. But all flames do not act in the same way. Some logs when burnt give out much smoke but aflame very little. Their flame is a mere flicker with practically no heat. On the other hand, there are certain logs of wood which exude very little smoke but flames of all shapes, giving intense heat. The Divine Spirit was breathed into us when we all were into womb, and ought to display its full brilliance on leaving the body. But most of us give out only smoke and must dwell in the regions of smoke till the Divine Flame is fully ablaze (56 : 43). Thus on its resurrection will the spirit resume its identity.

The Holy Book gives another reason when proving the transference of the particular consciousness from the deceased body into the new one with the same measure and quality which it possessed at the time of the separation of the soul from its last body. But if a most insignificant thing, like sperma and ovum, can impart to their offspring many of the traits of parental consciousness, they may follow the same course in the new form. Something may invisibly proceed

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from us at our death and remain in an embryonic condition in the new womb of nature and give birth to the new child in the life after death. So the Book says :—" Says he : who will give life to bones when they are rotten? Say: He will give life to them Who brought them into existence first and He is cognizant of all creation."¹

In the last line of the above quotation the Book gives another reason for Divine ability to do so. It needed knowledge of the whereabouts of things to be collected again. So the verse ends with a Divine Attribute referring to His knowledge of everything.

Life after Death.—The question no doubt is an intricate one, but the Holy Book makes a practical suggestion when appealing to our reason for the required belief. It makes observation of things around us in the long evolutionary journey which the ethereal world had to undergo before it attained the human consciousness under the wise consideration of the Originator and Designer. It clearly shows that the human frame in its material form cannot be the last stage. The Qur-ân speaks of it in a most illuminating manner; it carries us to the very first beginning of the universe. It speaks of the first formation of the heavens and the earth within seven periods² of gradation, which was to serve some ulterior object. What we call space was then full of vapours and gases, when another gaseous matter,

¹ " And he strikes out a likeness for Us and forgets his own creation. Says he: Who will give life to the bones when they are rotten ?

" Say: He will give life to them Who brought them into existence at first, and He is cognizant of all creation." (36 : 78 : 79).

² " He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth, and He directed Himself to the heaven, so He made them complete seven heavens, and He knows all things." (2 : 29.)

" And certainly We made above you seven ways; and never are We heedless of creation." (23 : 17.)

" And We made above you seven strong ones." (78 : 12.)

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hot like fire, that floated in space, assumed the form of the earth in its nascent condition. The heavens and the earth were at that time a closed thing with various contents in a confused and mixed mass. Water then came to open the closed¹ casket, and in so doing brought life to the earth. The earth, as the Book says, was constantly quaking in the beginning; and the mountains and the rocks were created to steady it.² Earth-spaces got wide ways to enable their coming denizens to follow the right course. The heaven-space was decorated with shining lamps to guide them³ in the darkness. The water came from the clouds in sufficient measure⁴ to move the dead matter. It settled in the earth and brought forth verdure⁵ and vegetation. It made gardens⁶ of fruits and flowers with varieties of corn for our subsistence.⁷ It was for this purpose that days and nights were made, with alternations in their duration which moved the winds

1 "Do not those who disbelieve see that the heavens and the earth were closed up, but We have opened them; and We have made of water every thing living; will they not then believe?" (21 : 30.)

2 "And We have made great mountains in the earth lest it might be convulsed with them, and We have made in it wide ways that they may follow a right direction." (21 : 30-31.)

3 "And We made a shining lamp." (78 : 13.)

"And certainly We have made strongholds in the heaven and We have made it fair seeming to the beholders." (15 : 16.)

4 "And We send down water from the clouds according to a measure, then We cause it to settle in the earth, and most surely We are able to carry it away." (23 : 18.)

5 "Then We cause to grow therein the grain." (80 : 27).

6 "Then We cause to grow thereby gardens of palm, trees and grapes for you; you have in them many fruits and from them do you eat." (23 : 19).

7 "Allah is He who created the heavens and the earth and sent down water from the clouds, then brought forth with it fruits as a sustenance for you and He has made the ships subservient to you, that they might run their course in the sea by His command, and He has made the rivers subservient to you." (14 : 32).

"That We may bring forth thereby corn and herbs." (78 : 15).

"Who made the earth a resting-place for you and the heaven the structure, and (who) sends down rain from the clouds then brings forth with it subsistence for you of the fruits; therefore do not set up rivals to Allah while you know." (2 : 22).

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and brought forth clouds. The winds also floated ships and boats that enriched us with the treasures¹ of the sea. The day² came that we might engage ourselves in the various occupations of life; night³ was made for our rest, to refresh us for the coming day. The Book also refers to our own creation; and tells how various products of the earth became combined under various specializations to evolve the genital seed as her essence.⁴ It became located in woman's womb,⁵ where it passed through other seven stages of evolution and gave rise to a new creation.⁶ The earth also brought forth cattle⁷ of many kinds for our use and food. The Book speaks very strongly of the subservience⁸ of the whole universe to our needs, and of various other gifts to us, innumerable⁹ and baffling even to imagination. In short, whatever we may need has already been provided for.

1 "Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day, and the ships that run in the sea with that which profits men, and the water that Allah sends down from the clouds, then gives life with it to the earth after its death and spreads in it all (kinds of) animals, and the changing of the winds and the clouds made subservient between the heaven and the earth, there are signs for a people who understand." (2 : 164).

2 "And We made the day for seeking livelihood" (78 : 11.)

3 "And We made the night to be a covering."

4 "And certainly We created man of an extract of clay." (23 : 12.)

5 "Then We made him a small life-germ in a firm resting-place." (23 : 13.)

6 "Then We made the life-germ a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made (in) the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We caused it to grow into another creation, so blessed be Allah, the best of the creators." (23 : 14).

7 "And in your (own) creation and in what He spreads abroad of animals there are signs for a people that are sure." (45 : 4).

8 "Allah is He who created the heavens and the earth and sent down water from the clouds, then brought forth with it fruits as a sustenance for you, and He has made the ships subservient to you, that they might run their course in the sea by His command, and He has made the rivers subservient to you."

9 "And He has made subservient to you the Sun and the Moon pursuing their courses, and He has made subservient to you the night and the day." (14 : 32-33).

10 "And He gives you of all that you ask Him; and if you count Allah's favours, you will not be able to number them; most surely man is very unjust, very ungrateful." (14 : 34).

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The Designer of the whole scheme, which took Him millions of years to accomplish, must have some true purpose¹ before Him. It cannot be all in vain.² It was all made as if it were to receive and accommodate some person of dignity on the earth;³ and that person was no other than man himself—God's own vicegerent. The Book came to raise him and exalt him to that state of honour.⁴ If we had to live on the earth for but sixty or seventy years and then to be no more at all, would not creation become a mere sport on the part of our Lord?⁵ Could all this labour have been in vain? It must be purposeful, as every other thing in His creation shows, and the purpose cannot materialize unless there be continuity of our life, when we shall make still further progress in realms beyond the grave. The Qur-án speaks repeatedly of the life after death. It makes it an article of faith for us.

Why a particular Revelation for guidance.—It is said that we need not look to any new Revelation, nor need we stick to it in its particular form. There is material enough to guide us in the old Revelations and other books of wisdom. Truth, it is said, may be sifted out of them to meet our requirements. Some of the new-fangled churches in our days have adopted this attitude. But here again, it is human judgment that is guiding our selection from the confused

¹ "Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day there are signs for men of understanding. (3 : 189).

² "Our Lord! Thou hast not created this in vain! (3 : 190).

³ "And surely We have dignified the children of Adam, and We carry them in the land and the sea, and we have given them of the good things, and we have made them to excel, by a (high) degree of excellence, most of those whom we have created." (17 : 70).

⁴ "And exalted for you your eminence." (94 : 4).

⁵ "And We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them for sport." (21 : 16).

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mass of past revelations. It was man that caused corruption, and it is the same man who is now out for reform. If the beautiful of yesterday has become the ugly of to-day, our choice of to-day is not likely to meet the approbation of to-morrow. Moreover, if the All-knowing God has been gracious enough to provide us of His own accord with necessary knowledge in the days of old, we need not usurp His functions in trying to do it for ourselves. The Qur-ân has anticipated the modern mind and argued out the case 1,300 years before. It declares any such attempt on our part to be puerile. It refers to the processes of Nature in supplying things to minister to our physical nourishment. Things of vital importance to us become vitiated and rotten. They become reduced to their elements after they are used once. But no manual labour has devised a system for bringing them to their original form. This is surely the Hand of God and to Him we look for our fresh supplies. In illustration of this universal principle, the Qur-ân devotes full two sections¹ in chapter called The Bee, which deal with the subject of revelation in all its phases. The section speaks first of the revelations before the Qur-ân; it admits their Divine origin; but goes on to say that they are not the same as when they were originally given. A new revelation is needed. In this connection it speaks of various things in the physical world essential for our life, such as water, milk, fruit and corn.² The Book mentions honey, also, in this respect. If

¹ Section 8-9.

² "And Allah has sent down water from the clouds and therewith given life to the earth after its death; most surely there is a sign in this for a people who would listen."

"And most surely there is a lesson for you in the cattle: We give you to drink of what is in their bellies—from betwixt the faeces and the blood—pure milk, easy and agreeable to swallow for those who drink."

"And of the fruits of the palms and the grapes—you obtain from them intoxication and goodly provision; most surely there is a sign in this for a people who ponder." (16: 65-67)

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the other things have been cited as different forms of food, honey¹ comes under the category of a medicine. No one can deny the indispensable nature of such gifts of God. They become rotten and lose their utility when once used, though their ingredients remain existing in the universe; but we look to Divine Providence for new provision which takes place by recomposition of the said elements. The Book first refers to water to illustrate the principle. There is limitless water in the sea, but it has lost its vivifying elements, as having become corrupt by mixing with other earthy substances. We cannot afford to have recourse to any condenser for a full supply of fresh water to meet the universal need. Rain, and rain only, comes from Above in full measure to re-animate Nature. Milk is next in importance to water for human life. It consists of liquid, greese and sugar, these are the three, out of the seven, things that are the necessary constituents of nourishing food. Milk exists in grass and corn on which cattle subsist, so we cannot separate it from these things. They are inseparably mixed then with blood and fæcal matter, as the Qur-ân says, and reach their final developement in the stomach of the cattle which supplies us with fresh milk. Fruit and corn come next to milk in food value. They disappear at the end of every crop, but their component parts are not destroyed. They exist, mixed with other things in the atmosphere, but God sends out the spring breezes to sift out what is necessary from the confused mass. Whatever is necessary for the same form of fruit or corn automatically becomes separated and goes to the place where it is needed. There is no confusion in the new

¹ "And your Lord revealed to the bee saying; make hives in the mountains and in the trees and in what they build."

"Then eat of all the fruits and walk in the ways of your lord submissively. There comes forth from within it a beverage of many colours, in which there is healing for men; most surely there is a sign in this for a people who reflect."
(16: 68, 69.)

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distribution. Then the Book speaks of honey. As we need food, so we need medicine. Food and medicine alike are from the Hand of God and are used by us to cope with various ailments. The Qur-ân has chosen honey to illustrate this point for various reasons. Honey comes from the essence of innumerable fruits and flowers that are scattered far apart from each other. Honey is the result of their mixture, but the medicinal value of honey cannot come from human hands. The bee has been created to do the work of the druggist, and travels hundreds of miles to collect the sweet essences, as the Book says. She never loses her way and always comes back with material for dispensing the useful drug. Time will corrupt all other mixtures, but it cannot affect honey. The Qur-ân is the spiritual honey. The Word of God nourishes our soul. It is as necessary to us as physical food. If the Divine Hand sends these blessings to us anew when they have become spoilt and corrupted, He will do the same in the matter of Revelation.

Angels.—The Qur-ân speaks of Angels as sentient beings that move the forces of Nature in creating new things. We cannot deny the existence of some such agencies working in the universe. But to return, for the moment, to the question of our means of nourishment. All these are derived from elements and atoms which automatically unite and reunite to help the process of creation. They are punctual and regular, they follow a prescribed path, they combine with each other in given proportions, to create new things. The whole process shows that knowledge is possessed by them, though they themselves belong to the dumb world which has no consciousness. Their work exhibits mathematical precision and exactitude; which means that the processes are carried out under the direction of some mind, but they

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themselves are without mind. God is, without doubt, the First Intelligent Cause, but He seems to work through various agencies. He is All-powerful, but it pleases Him to work in the human body. They follow implicitly the injunction ' of the Lord. We should become angels, too, if we obeyed, as they do the Lord, nay, we might even rule the angelic world.² The Qur-ân speaks of three functions of angels. I have referred to the first, that of moving the powers of Nature to perform their respective tasks. The other two have to do with their ministry to man. They inspire us to do good; and if certain unseen agencies incite us to evil, it must not be forgotten that we in like manner receive urges to do good in an imperceptible way, and such "urges" come from the angels. All this lies within the experience of any average man. If we listen to the angelic voice, they become our guardians during life and protect us from evil ways; and in the end they become subservient to us, if we understand the secrets of Nature and proper use thereof. Science has to a great extent brought the angels of the elements under our rule. They may be termed Laws of Nature. But Law in itself is lifeless and unconscious. It needs a mind behind it. It is Allah of the Qur-ân, Who has appointed angels as functionaries of His Law.

¹ "They fear their Lord supreme and do what they are commanded." (16: 50)

² "And when we said to the angels, Make obeisance to Adam, they did obeisance, but Iblis (did it not); he refused and he was proud, and he was one of the unbelievers. (2: 34.)

CHAPTER IV.

OUR EVOLUTIONARY JOURNEY

The Origin of Man.—We are on the journey of Evolution, and in our travels have passed through various worlds of progress. In each world there are several stages where we are furnished with new equipment for the next. We may, or may not, complete the progress that we should have made in any particular world, but no sooner does our equipment become worn out, and is no longer serviceable, than we have to leave it and enter into the new world. In other words, we are given a new body at every stage. On our departure from a world we leave that world's body behind us, and on entering into a new world we are given a new body. The termination of any one of these stages of existence means death. But the same death is a necessary gate through which we pass into the coming world.

The Holy Book traces our origin to the region of stars,¹ which in the hours of darkness shed light which pierces its way through the earth and makes it pregnant with its contents. Water also comes down from the clouds and penetrating the earth,² helps to produce and nurture trees³ and cattles, which in their turn supply us with food containing all the constituents of protoplasm. Thus sperma is created, which when located in the womb of a woman passes through

¹ "Consider the heaven and the comer by night ;

"And what will make you know how great the comer by night is ?

"The star of piercing brightness" (86 : 1—3.)

² "And We send down water from the clouds according to a measure, then We cause it to settle in the earth, and most surely We are able to carry it away." (23 : 18.)

³ "Then We cause to grow thereby gardens of palm trees and grapes for you ; you have in them many fruits and from them do you eat." (23 : 19.)

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various embryonic stages,¹ where it receives bones and flesh for further progress. On their completion something new is born which the Holy Qur-ān calls *Nafs*. This is no other than our spirit, an assemblage of passions of which the chief characteristic is consciousness. Thus we come into this world and our aim in this earthly sojourn is to reach the stage of soul. The spirit must pass through several stages of progress, but its course is interrupted when its equipment is no longer serviceable, and this means death. We naturally leave the body here, but the life is continuous. The spirit makes further progress. If at the time of death it has become ripened into the soul, then it enters into the world of further progress which, in religious terminology, is called Heaven.² But if it has not completed its course, then it will have to begin the journey from the very stage in which it was at the time of its departure from this planet.

There is one great difference which distinguishes the two journeys—the past and the future. We possess a material body, with or without consciousness, in all our past stages. Consciousness originates in the womb. Subsequently matter and consciousness travel together. Then follows death, and the spirit is separated from the body. But there is always a marked pause at the termination of each world. The progressive agency seems to suspend all its activities for a time, and then sets forth on the new journey. So also in our own journey there occurs a great departure after death. Matter is finished with. There is no further progress for it. The further journey is the journey of the spirit, with con-

¹ "Then We made the life-germ a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made (in) the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We caused it to grow into another creation, so blessed be Allah, the best of the creators." (23: 14.)

² "And enter into My garden." (89: 30.)

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sciousness, so there must be the longest possible pause wherein the spirit will remain absolutely inactive. This stage has been termed *Barzakh*¹—the period between death and resurrection. The spirit is placed in what the Holy Qur-ān calls *Ajdas*,² the plural of *Jadas*, which means a state of being cut off. The spirit has become cut off from the body, and so the latter cut off from further progress.

Divine economy has been pleased to give all spirits simultaneous start in the coming journey—that of the spirit unencumbered by flesh. It must await the time when every spirit has left the earth. A kind of swoon overtakes all those who leave the earth, and this continues until the spirits rise again at their resurrection. They will rise from their resting places, as if awakened out of sleep which will appear to them as if it had been for portion of a day. But coming events cast their shadows before. We shall see Heaven and Hell, as in a dream. This, without doubt, will be the commencement of the further journey. But the spirits will have to start, each from the stage in which it was when death overtook it.

Psychologists differ as to the origin of the soul and its nature, some holding that it comes from another sphere and joins itself to the body, where it becomes a prisoner of the flesh. But the Holy Qur-ān describes it as an evolved form of consciousness, which is itself only a child of the body. Human consciousness, when it is cleansed of its low nature and equipped with true spirituality, becomes, under Divine

¹ "Haply I may do good in that which I have left. By no means! it is a (mere) word that he speaks; and before them is a barrier until the day they are raised." (23: 100.)

² "And the forms shall be breathed into, when lo, from their graves they shall hasten on to their Lord!" (36: 51).

OUR

Inspiration, the Soul. The Lord breathed¹ His Spirit into man when the materials of the body in its embryonic condition became properly arranged. He did the same in the case of Jesus, when he was in Mary's womb. The Spirit of the Lord is not confined like a prisoner's within the walls of the body, but has been endowed with our physical nature as the wherewithal for its future growth. The Holy Qur-ân often speaks of coming events as having already happened, more especially in the case of such potentialities as are, in the knowledge of God, certain of actualization on some future occasion. The Divine Spirit was breathed into us in order that we might receive homage from the angels, which will come to pass when the Divine Flame so kindled in us becomes fully ablaze. Yet the Holy Qur-ân mentions it as already accomplished. This, in fact, is our future goal. We need a religion that will enable us to claim this predestined honour. It may or may not be ours in this life, but it will be within our reach when our time is come to leave the world. We cannot afford to kill the body as the sickly theologians in pre-Islamic days were wont to teach, since it would be a suicidal act on our part, involving an attempt to kill the Divine Spirit within us. What we need is something to train our physical "urges" to help, and not retard, the growth of the Spirit.

In the animal frame, matter reaches its final development, but its further progress is solely concerned with consciousness, which in its initial stage consists of various passions and emotions. In the animal kingdom there is hardly any right of ownership. Animals, in fact, possess

¹ "So when I have made him complete and breathed into him of My Inspiration, fall down making obeisance to him." (15: 29).

And He it is Who originates the creation, then reproduces it, and it is easy to Him; and His is the most exalted state in the heavens and the earth, and He is the Mighty, the Wise." (30: 27.)

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nothing of that individual consciousness which in the human mind creates the idea of *mine* and *thine*. Animals claim everything they need, as if it were their own, while the human mind is capable of making a distinction between *mine* and *thine*. But since we have risen from the animal state we have in us the animal instinct of usurping others' rights. Most of us verge on the border of animality and worship the same spirit, which is the initial stage of the human 'self.' Had this spirit been left unchecked, as in the case of a baby who claims everything he sees as his own, we should all of us, by this time, have been in a condition of sheer chaos. But the Great Designer does not leave us here. He has given us a goal that is very far off. We have been sent into the world to prepare ourselves for the journey that lies before us. It is for us to mould anew the newly arisen Spirit into Soul before we leave the earth. For this reason we have to pass through stages of which four are the main and they are thus styled by the Holy Book :—

Nafs Ammāra ' (the Commanding Spirit).—This is but another name for the animal spirit. The word *Nafs*, which I translate here as *Spirit*, literally means the human 'self'—another name for human consciousness which has nothing material in its composition, but is purely a spirit. It is unruly in its demands at this stage of development. It must have everything its own way, compelling us to submit to its promptings, and for this reason it has been called the Commanding Spirit. Nevertheless, it becomes tamed under the usages of society or the ordinances of revelation and begins to have glimmerings of the distinction between right and wrong.

1 "And I do not declare myself free, most surely (man's) self is wont to command (him to do) evil, except such as my Lord has had mercy on: surely my Lord is Forgiving, Merciful." (12: 53.)

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Nafs Mulhamah.—The spirit is called *Nafs Mulhamah*¹ only when it becomes inspired and begins to differentiate between right and wrong. This new knowledge forms the basis of further development. No sooner is consciousness born in us than it should be placed before that spirit for its further advancement. The Sacred Book feels this necessity. It accordingly makes mention of seven things at the same place where it deals with the birth of consciousness; which means that the newly-born thing has to assume these features before it becomes the soul. We have also to pass through the intervening stages, yet these seven features- mentioned in the Holy Qur-ân must remain ever before us as our guiding principle, in whichever condition of spirit we may be. These stages are :—

1. Belief in the truth. The Holy Qur-ân calls it *Imân*. Our every action arises from certain convictions which are the mainsprings of our deeds whether right or wrong. Hence the Holy Qur-ân lays down the necessity for making certain truths our belief. The believers, so the Book says, are the only persons who become 'successful' in life.

2. Lowliness in our prayers.

3. Abstention from vanity, levity and absurdity.

4. Aiming at purification and sharing our properties with others. The word used in the text is *zakât* which gives both the ideas. They are in fact correlated to each other.

5. Continence, that is to say, purity in sexual relations.

6. Keeping of trusts and covenants.

7. Putting into practice the requirements of Muslim prayer.

¹ "So He intimated to it by inspiration its deviating from truth and its guarding (against evil)." (91 : 8.)

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Nafs Lawwama.—All of us may not have an opportunity to acquaint ourselves with the Qur-ānic injunctions, but public opinion and the other requirements of society demand from us the observance of these things. Something within accuses us if we go against them. It censures us whenever we think of violating another's right. This inner voice is termed conscience in common phraseology, but in the Holy Qur-ān it is described as the *Chiding Spirit* (*Nafs Lawwama*) and it is the third evolutionary stage of our spirit's growth. The moment we possess the knowledge of right and wrong a sort of struggle starts between the Commanding Spirit and the Chiding Spirit. The former commands usurpation and misappropriation, while the latter speaks of justice and equity, in the light of the above knowledge. Unfortunately, most of us stand on the verge of animality and worship the Commanding Spirit. Nay, such are more dangerous to human society than the animals. We have to deal with the spirit in such a way that it yields to the voice of the Accusing or Chiding Spirit.¹

The question of the growth and development of this Chiding Spirit in man has been fraught with many a misunderstanding in modern intellectual circles, the most important of these being the one concerning the sex. Extreme views have always been held here on this subject. At one time it was regarded as the root of all sinfulness in human mind, and as such fit only to be shunned as a deadly poison. Then the pendulum swung to the other direction, and it is believed now that it has no bearing on our moral

¹ "Islamic prayer has been introduced mainly for our elevation. The Holy Qur-an makes the Lord God as our prototype. We have to call Him with His Characteristics (7: 180). The first thing we recite in the prayer is that our Lord is free from all defects and impurities. Then we speak of His possessing all that is good and it is for us to seek to emulate Him in this. In Ch. 29, v. 45, we find the same thing said of prayer.

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nature and can be indulged in an absolute freedom, without in any way jeopardising our intellectual and moral growth. A proper understanding of the subject will, however, require a complete grasp of the fundamental laws of life and organism, the most important of which is the law of combination.

The law of Combination and the sexual instincts in man.

If combination is the chief process at work in everything in nature, from Emanation to Perfection, it follows that the ingredients of all things in every stage of their growth must differ from each other in their qualities, inasmuch as no one thing will mix with another to produce a new thing under the law of chemical combination, unless all these exhibit variety in properties. The Holy Book refers to this more explicitly when it says that everything in nature has its mate for the work of procreation. All are male or female.¹ This establishes to some degree the difference in their natures. The Book speaks of another wonderful phenomenon when it tells us that heaven and earth stand towards each other in the relation of male and female. The heavens, with everything in them, have been evolved with activity,² while the earth, on the other hand, had been made receptive of their effects. How could matter, in the shape of the heavens, differ in its nature from the other form, that is to say, the Earth, unless it works in obedience to some will?

This difference and combination pervade the whole of the universe and in the human world it takes the form of sex.

¹ And of everything We created pairs that you may be mindful. (51 : 49).

And He it is Who spread the earth and made in it firm mountains and rivers, and of all fruits He has made in it two kinds; He makes the night cover the day; most surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect. (18 : 8).

² Consider the cloud pouring rain. (86 : 11).

And the earth splitting (with plants.) (86 : 12).

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The control of our sexual instincts is as essential as that of the stomach. When beyond control, sexual passions know no bounds. Men, women and animals—all are victimised indiscriminately. Even inanimate things are used to satisfy them; and this is more dangerous to health than any other unnatural practice; since it not only injures the sexual faculties but harms the powers of sight and of the brain.

We read of Sodom in ancient history and the curse under which it lay, but its sins are unfortunately repeated even now in our days in some centres of modern civilization. Some men of culture would not regard the practice as unnatural, for they maintain that there is a third species in our race, where man's love goes after man, and legislation should not, therefore, obstruct such love. The Qur-ān refutes this fallacious logic in one word when it says:—“Women are your tilth.” Besides condemning the practice the Book explains the object for which the instinct in dispute was given. It is not pleasure but some higher purpose, which brought our various instincts into existence, though pleasure indeed be the prime mover in the generality of cases. And such an alleviation of the incidence of our various duties speaks eloquently of the Designer's wisdom. The procreation of species was the primary object of sexual instincts. If no ploughman would dream of sowing his seed in a land not meant for cultivation, none should stoop to a practice that does not help towards bringing forth children; and here woman is man's only partner. But the interests of the coming generation and their proper upbringing demand that the sexes should stand in matrimonial relations with each other, before they come together, and the fact of their marriage should be known: hence all concealed marriages are disallowed. But any and every female should not be brought into connu-

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bial relation. There are various things to be considered before a man marries a woman. For instance, it is incestuous to bring mothers, daughters and sisters into matrimonial connection, and the Holy Book puts ten other classes of women on the prohibition list.¹ All women married to others are forbidden for connubial purposes. Prostitution, temporary marriage, concubinage and paramours have been condemned. Though war-captivity terminates all former matrimonial relations existing between persons of hostile nations, yet a new master cannot share his bed with a female captive unless she be first made free, and then married according to the usage of the conquering race. Not only is fornication declared to be an indecency and evil, but even going nigh to it is forbidden. For the same reason women are asked to conceal their ornaments and their hair from the eye of strangers. In short, anything that might possibly excite the passions should be concealed. The use of the veil, as practised in the East, is not a religious ordinance. Local causes have commended the practice and sanctified it into a custom. The Book looks with disfavour on the promiscuous mingling of the two sexes which is often to be observed in the West.

¹ Forbidden to you are your mothers and your daughters and your sisters and your paternal aunts and your maternal aunts and brothers' daughters and sisters' daughters and your mothers that have suckled you and your foster-sisters and mothers of your wives and your step-daughters who are in your guardianship, (born) of your wives to whom you have gone in; but if you have not gone in to them, there is no blame on you (in marrying them), and the wives of your sons who are of your own loins, and that you should have two sisters together, except what has already passed; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (4: 23).

And whoever among you has not within his power ampleness of means to marry free believing women, then (he may marry) of those whom your right hands possess from among your believing maidens; and Allah knows best your faith; you are (sprung) the one from the other; so marry them with the permission of their masters, and give them their dowries justly, they being chaste, not fornicating, nor receiving paramours; and when they are taken in marriage, then if they are guilty of indecency, they shall suffer half the punishment which is (inflicted) upon free women. This is for him among you who fears falling into evil; and that you abstain is better for you, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (4: 25).

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Staring at one of another sex is forbidden, and we have been clearly ordered to "guard all our holes." It is the beauty of the Book that though it deals on occasions with delicate subjects, yet it never violates the sense of decency in its choice of words. The last injunction though very euphemistic and concise is wide enough to bring the evil use of eyes, ears and mouth (tongue) also within its scope.

Nafs Mutmainnah—The Spirit at rest. This careful guarding and control of our instincts and the judicious satisfaction of our appetites apply to all the different aspects of our consciousness, while we strive for the fullest assertion of the Chiding Spirit in us. The struggle is hard and long drawn, but an earnest soul keeps steadily on its evolutionary journey, and ultimately reaches a point where the Commanding Spirit has completely surrendered to the Chiding Spirit. The voice of the uncontrollable spirit would be hushed up for ever and the Chiding Spirit would achieve full victory. We shall shun evil and virtue shall rule every nook and corner of our hearts. The spirit¹ will then be at rest, and thus we will reach the fourth stage of our evolutionary travel. A fire from above descends upon the heart; it burns out the whole of our physical nature and consumes every prestige of evil inclination that is therein, and we become reconciled to our Lord.² He also is pleased with us. Here we pass on to the fifth and sixth stage of our growth. His will becomes the rule of our life, and we are like lifeless machines in His hands. Then the soul is refined and the final stage is reached. All temptations disappear utterly. We feel as though we are living for others, their happiness becomes the object of our life. We are active only to supply others' needs. We take

¹ O soul that art at rest ! (89 : 27.)

² Return to your Lord, well pleased (with Him), well-pleasing (Him). (89 : 28.)

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infinite pains and face all the hardships of existence, but for the service of others. In fact, we do all that we used to do before, but, whereas formerly we were self-centred in our motives, now it is the benefit of others which induces us to face the trials of life. We walk humbly with the Lord, and most willingly adopt all His ways to maintain and nourish His other creatures. When we reflect His colour as *Rabbul 'Alamin*—"The Nourisher and Maintainer of All," we enter into His Heaven like a faithful servant, and become at one with Him. This is the true Holy Communion when the Divine Blood, to use the metaphor, runs into our veins. We lose our entity and merge in Him, and the soul becomes mature. This is the final stage of our growth. Here our journey comes to an end. A Light¹ from within shines forth and guides us to the realms of our Lord that we may walk therein.

There is another salient feature observable in people who are nearing the conditions when the soul is born. Under the first three aforesaid conditions of the Spirit we act for ourselves. Our own happiness and comfort inspire all our activities. But when the Spirit has attained its rest, we act as trustees for others taking the remainder of the world as our beneficiary. Man, of the whole creation, possesses two distinguishing features in his capacity for earning. Unlike other animals, he thinks for the morrow and can store up something against a rainy day. Secondly, he can earn more than he needs. Though all of us possess these two qualities, yet they bear a different significance to a people of advanced spirituality. Such consider that these instincts were given to them for the benefit of others. They will accept only a

¹ "On that day you will see the faithful men and the faithful women their light running before them and on their right hand—good news for you to-day: gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide therein, that is the grand achievement." (57: 12.)

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pittance from their labour while the surplus must go to others. They become oblivious of their own needs and go against their own desires. Their life is, as it were, a tyranny over their own 'self.'

We know very little of the soul, only that something becomes created in us at a certain stage of spiritual development, as an agent of God to rule on His behalf. Formerly, we used to obey the spirit in us, but now we obey the soul directly.

We do nothing unless we are ordered to do so, and for all our activities we look to Him. It is the same Divine Spirit which was breathed into us, when in the womb, but is now full-grown and worthy of receiving homage from God's angels. I am not speaking of fiction, but of reality. Though men of such souls are very rare, but they have not yet entirely disappeared from the earth.

Our knowledge is very superficial. There are many things of which we know very little. For example, consciousness, life and electricity are each a mystery to us. Matter engenders them, but they are absolutely different from matter, and the soul may be classed under the same category. The Holy Qur-an rightly says that we are given very little knowledge.

The Return of the Soul.—If continuity of life is a scientific truth, the soul thus evolved cannot remain on earth after its separation from the body, for Soul is after all another name for human consciousness, purged absolutely of all physical elements. It is a spirit, without earthly link or tendency. It must rise upwards to other regions according to its capacity. The soul of the Holy Prophet remained only

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forty days on the earth, according to the traditions. Jesus,¹ Elijah, called Idris² in the Holy Qur-ân, and other prophets also rose after death from the terrestrial to the higher spheres.

The soul emanates from the Divine Light. This is precisely what science tells us to-day. It traces our beginnings back to light, which passes through various phases till it assumes that of human consciousness. Our body consists of all the concomitants of the progressive agency, electrons being among them. The human soul may embody itself in any of these substances, according to its capacity and fitness for the return journey to Light. We read of the Holy Prophet that on the night of his Ascension he rode to heaven on *Burâq*, a body composed of electrons, according to the literal meaning of the word. We are also told that our movements in heaven will be so swift that we shall reach the place, however distant it be, the moment we think of it; and this is readily imaginable if our soul has assumed the attributes of these substances.

But such an electric movement pertains to the Soul only, and not to the physical body whose very nature keeps the Soul anchored to the earth. Carnal passions are only a rarefied form of the earthly nature, and a spirit cannot therefore ascend unless it be free of them. Such freedom alone gives it a start for the upward journey, especially when it seeks to retrace its steps along the same route by which it travelled hither in the first instance. But there is one distinction. On our outward journey to the present state we had passed through various regions without knowing it.

¹ "When Allah said: O Jesus! I will cause you to die and exalt you in My presence and clear you of those who disbelieve and make those who follow you above those who disbelieve to the day of resurrection: then to Me shall be your return, so I will decide between you concerning that in which you differed." (8: 54.)

² "And We raised him to an elevated state." (19: 57).

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We reached the earth with no consciousness in us. It appeared in our frame to partake in a measure of our physical nature. But when consciousness becomes purified of material things it rises heavenward in the form of a soul. It passes again through the same regions, but it carries with it this time two new capacities,—one articulation and the other consciousness—in its purified form, that is to say, the Soul. We have to return to the Divine Light from where we came.

But most of us bid farewell to this world when we are still at the stage of the animal spirit ; to which we bow down and whose dictates we obey, and it is only the force of public opinion which keeps us within reasonable bounds. Thus public opinion creates conscience in us in its most primitive form. Its voice is very weak, and we do not attempt to listen to it unless we are afraid of being detected. The great virtue of the present day civilized society lies in the people's efforts to conceal their wrongs from others. For example, sexual purity has been respected from the earliest days, but though public opinion has become notoriously weak on this point, yet it would nevertheless censure any conduct that would affect the rights of those who stand in matrimonial relations to each other. Various means have been devised to hush up and conceal what has been done amiss. Birth control is one which is playing havoc on our social relations. The centres of civilization are simply repeating the practice of Pompeii's days. Wickedness has become rampant though in a most refined form. Learning and culture have been prostituted to give a polish even to our vilest deeds. In short, wellnigh all of us leave this world when the animal spirit in us is still at its height and we indulge in all kinds of evil. In other words, we have not been able to release ourselves from the clutches of the Commanding Spirit. We may,

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and doubtless do, understand the difference between right and wrong, and to this extent our Spirit has reached its second stage of evolution. But, alas! we remain only standing at the threshold of the third stage when death removes us from the scene. We, no doubt, have entered the province of the Chiding Spirit, but we take no heed to its warnings. We gag it, and turn our backs on its protests. We may die in this state of carelessness, but the Chiding Spirit must one day rise, and then it will appear with a vengeance indeed. This will occur at our resurrection¹ because we must leave our body behind and with it its appendage—the Spirit in its first form.

Day of Resurrection.—We shall therefore have to rise again, since we have not passed the stage of the Commanding Spirit, though we did possess a rudimentary knowledge of right and wrong. Our resurrection will bring us face to face at once with the advance of the mind in the form of the Chiding Spirit. And then another trouble awaits us. Here we can avoid the detection of wrong-doing, because wrong-doing is mostly under cover of the body, but there all our efforts to conceal evil will be of no avail, and our inner self will stand forth naked in the sight of all.² All that has been done clandestinely will stand forth as an open secret. Thus the pangs caused by the Chiding Spirit will increase exceedingly. It will be a terrible day, subjecting us to unimaginable pains and torments. Our perceptions will grow more intense, our physical nature weak, and our remorse and sense of shame will reach a fearful pitch. We shall suffer torments in their most acute form on the day when we will

¹ "Nay! I call to witness the day of Resurrection."

"Nay! I call to witness the self-accusing spirit." (75: 1-2.)

² "On that day you shall be exposed to view—no secret of yours shall remain hidden." (69: 18.)

On that day when hidden things shall be made manifest." (86: 9)

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be stripped of all our physical parts. This awful day has been called by the Holy Qur-an the day of Resurrection. The sacred books have not entered on any campaign of terror, as the Church says, if they appeal to us by their message concerning the Last Day. Its pains cannot be exaggerated, and I deliberately aver that the very words of the Scriptures themselves have failed to convey a hundredth part of the agonies that we shall have to experience on that Day. It is not an inconceivable thing. We can understand it if we only visualise the Chiding Spirit at its zenith and every moral and spiritual wrong in us revealed. Just as the body of a patient suffering from a venereal disease bears sometimes palpable marks of the scourge, it will be no surprising thing to find our various organs bearing witness to the wrongs we have done in this life. ¹ The agonies of the time will be simply unbearable, and we shall naturally long either for return ² to our past life in order to do better, or to have some purgatorial treatment that may relieve us of the torment. But the Beneficent Lord has anticipated our needs ³ and His Providence has created for us a hospital ⁴ in the form of Hell ; because we, being on the course of evolution, cannot go back. Hell, in fact, though an evil resort, is the best suited for our progress in the spiritual world. Had we left the world with the Chiding Spirit perfected and the voice of conscience heard in every way there could have been neither Resurrection

¹ On that day We will set a seal upon their mouths, and their hands shall speak to Us, and their feet shall bear witness of what they earned." (36 : 65.)

² "And could you see when they are made to stand before the Fire, then they shall say : Would that we were sent back, and we would not reject the communications of our Lord and we would be of the believers !" (6 : 27.)

³ "Except those on whom your Lord has mercy ; and for this did He create them ; and the word of your Lord is fulfilled : Certainly I will fill hell with the jinn and the men, all together." (11 : 119.)

⁴ "So to-day ransom shall not be accepted from you nor from those who disbelieved ; your abode is the fire ; it is your friend, and evil is the resort." (57 : 15.)

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nor Hell. We would have been like angels: our souls freed from all earthly passions and none to be reclaimed by the Hell. But since we could not avail ourselves of our opportunities in this life for the required evolution, and abused all the blessings¹ of God which He gave us for this purpose, we must descend into Hell, as a matter of certainty to make up the deficiency at the cost of frightful torments. Hell, for this reason, has been called in the Holy Qur-*an* a mother or a friend. It will take us in her lap, like a mother who brings her child willingly to a surgical operation to free his body from the wounds from which he is suffering, though the operation will be a most painful one.

Hell and Heaven.—Hell is a natural sequence to our evil actions,² nay, it is a logical necessity; we need it, and cannot avoid it.³ It has been created to meet the needs to which we will become alive as soon as we are resurrected. Hidden Truths, as I have said, will then become revealed. They will appear before our eyes,⁴ and nothing will remain concealed.⁵ Heaven and Hell will become manifest to us,⁶ the former as the abode of bliss and happiness⁷ and the

¹ "Then on that day you shall most certainly be questioned about the boons." (102: 8.)

² Surely you and what you worship besides Allah are the firewood of hell; to it you shall come. (21: 98).

³ Then set *yourself* upright to the right *course* before there come from Allah the day which cannot be averted: on that day they shall become separated. (30: 43).

⁴ Certainly *you were* heedless of it, but now We have removed from *you your* veil, so *your* sight today is sharp. (50: 22).

⁵ On that day when hidden things shall be made manifest. (86: 9).

⁶ And the garden shall be brought near for those who guard (against evil). (26: 90).

And the garden shall be brought near to those who guard (against evil), not far off: (50: 31).

⁷ Does every man of them desire that he should be made to enter the garden of bliss? (70: 38).

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latter as the place of affliction and chastisement,¹ the only place for that spiritual purification which will be our indispensable need. We shall not be able to return to earth² for our purification, though we may long and even pray for it, because we shall leave behind the material body, as it is necessary only for an earthly sojourn. Heaven, on the other hand, will not receive us in the condition in which we now find ourselves, since it is a place exclusively for purified souls.³ Besides, if we be not purged of our earthly appetites

¹ And whoever disobeys Allah and His Apostle and goes beyond His limits, He will cause him to enter fire to abide in it, and he shall have an abasing chastisement.

And as for those who are guilty of an indecency from among your women, call to witness against them four (witnesses) from among you; then if they bear witness confine them to the houses until death takes them away or Allah opens some way for them.

And as for the two who are guilty of *indecentcy* from among you, give them both a slight punishment; then if they repent and amend, turn aside from them; surely Allah is Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful.

Repentance with Allah is only for those who do evil in ignorance, then turn (to Allah) soon, so these it is to whom Allah turns (mercifully), and Allah is Ever-knowing, Wise.

And repentance is not for those who go on doing evil deeds, until when death comes to one of them, he says: surely now I repent; nor (for) those who die while they are unbelievers. These are they for whom We have prepared a painful chastisement. (4: 14-18).

They shall have chastisement in this world's life, and the chastisement of the hereafter is certainly more grievous, and they shall have no protector against Allah (13: 34).

(Into) hell? they shall enter into it, and an evil place it is to settle in. (14: 29).

And thus do We recompense him who is extravagant and does not believe in the communications of his Lord; and certainly the chastisement of the hereafter is severer and more lasting. (20: 127).

² And whomsoever Allah makes err, he has no guardian after Him; and *you shall* see the unjust, when they see the chastisement, saying: is there any way to return. (42: 44).

³ And it is said to those who guard (against evil): What is it that your Lord has revealed? They say, Good. For those who do good in this world is good, and certainly the abode of the hereafter is better; and certainly most excellent is the abode of those who guard (against evil). (16: 30).

On that day *you will* see the faithful men and the faithful women—their light running before them and on their right hand—good news for you to-day: gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide therein, that is the grand achievement. (57: 12).

And We will remove whatever of ill-feeling is in their breasts; the rivers shall flow beneath them and they shall say: All praise is due to Allah Who guided us to this; and we would not have found the way had it not been that Allah had guided us; certainly the apostles of our Lord brought the truth; and it shall be cried out to them that this is the garden of which you are made heirs for what you did. (7: 43).

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then how can we live in regions which provide only spiritual food? Again, if Heaven is the place of light¹ how can we face it if we are of dark substance?² Heaven is also the place for the spirit at rest,³ whereas our minds will surely be full of restlessness. The voice of conscience, which, after the Resurrection, will become too strong to be ignored by us, will goad us on to purification. In these circumstances we shall be left with no other alternative than to enter into Hell.⁴ We shall also realise the agonies which its denizens will have to experience, and their imagination alone will terrify us, but as there will be no other course open to us, we shall be driven towards it,⁵ as if we were dumb and blind,⁶ and there will be no injustice in it.

¹ On the day when the hypocritical men and the hypocritical women will say to those who believe: Wait for us, that we may have light from your light; it shall be said: Turn back and seek a light. Then separation would be brought about between them, with a wall having a door in it; (as for) the inside of it, there shall be mercy in it, and (as for) the outside of it, before it there shall be chastisement. (57: 13).

(Many) faces on that day shall be bright. (80: 38).

² And (as for) those who have earned evil, the punishment of an evil is the like of it, and abasement shall come upon them—they shall have none to protect them from Allah—as if their faces had been covered with slices of the dense darkness of night; these are the inmates of the fire, in it they shall abide. (10: 27).

Darkness shall cover them. (80: 41).

³ O soul that art at rest! Return to *your* Lord, well-pleased (with Him), well-pleasing (Him). So enter among My servants, And enter into My Garden. (89: 27-30).

⁴ And when it is said to him, Guard against (the punishment of) Allah, pride carries him off to sin; therefore hell is sufficient for him; and certainly it is an evil resting-place. (2: 206).

Say to those who disbelieve: You shall be vanquished, and driven together to hell; and evil is the resting place. (3: 11).

For those who respond to their Lord is good; and (as for) those who do not respond to Him, had they all that is in the earth and the like thereof with it they would certainly offer it for a ransom. (As for) those, an evil reckoning shall be theirs and their abode is hell, and evil is the resting-place. (13: 18).

⁵ The day on which they shall be driven away to the fire of hell with violence. (52: 13).

⁶ And whomsoever Allah guides, he is the follower of the right way, and whomsoever He causes to err, *you shall* not find for him guardians besides Him; and We will gather them together on the day of Resurrection on their faces, blind and dumb and deaf; their abode is hell; whenever it becomes allayed We will add to their burning. (17: 97).

He shall say: My Lord! why hast Thou raised me blind, and I was a seeing one indeed? (20: 125).

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The description of Hell given by the Qur'an often reminds me of a hospital established for the treatment of persons suffering from some most painful diseases. There will naturally be the shrieks and cries, weeping and moaning¹ of those suffering and these will not die out until the end of the treatment is reached. Besides our affliction, remorse for wrong-doing, would arise from pains analogous to those we feel when we taste some bitter and nauseous medicine. We shall have to drink of a distasteful drink and a very hot one too.²

Like those who suffer from a skin disease we shall also need a change of skin if we are to get any relief. We shall have to undergo a sort of surgical operation.³

Fire is admittedly the most cleansing of all purifying factors. It is most natural, therefore, that this house of purgatory should be made of burning,⁴ purging fire with a pall of smoke over it.⁵ It will be fitting that its walls, floor and roof should all be of fire and that sinners be placed on beds of fire also.⁶ If sufferers from nerve-troubles or filthy diseases are ordered by their medical advisers to be placed in a steamed room in a Turkish bath, how can we scoff at the

¹ So as to those who are unhappy, they shall be in the fire; for them shall be sighing and groaning in it. (11 : 106).

And for those who disbelieve in their Lord is the chastisement of hell, and evil is the resort. (67 : 6).

When they shall be cast therein, they shall hear a loud moaning of it as it heaves. (67 : 7).

² Hell is before him and he shall be given to drink of hot water. (14 : 16).
In hot wind and boiling water. (56 : 42).

But boiling and intensely cold water (78 : 25).

³ (As for) those who disbelieve in Our communications, We shall make them enter fire; so oft as their skins are thoroughly burned. We will change them for other skins, that they may taste the chastisement; surely Allah is Mighty, Wise. (4 : 56).

⁴ A burning fire. 101 : 11.

⁵ And the shade of black smoke. (56 : 43).

⁶ They shall have a bed of the hell-fire and from above them coverings (of it); and thus do We reward the unjust. (7 : 41).

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idea of Hell and of us being ordered thither by Nature's relentless surgeons,' rough in their methods, perhaps, but bound to do as directed? Metals mixed with alloy are usually put in the melting pot, so that dross is burnt off and the substance purified; so also we shall have to undergo a similar process to rid ourselves of physical dross. For this reason *Sagar* is one of the names given to Hell. The word means anything that changes the nature of other things by melting them. In a word, distress will come to a sinner from every quarter² to cleanse him from the evils that surround him from all sides.³

The different names given by the Qur-ân to Hell help to explain its nature. *Sâ'ir*, *Jahim* and *Jahannam* mean some thing in the nature of a burning fire, *Laza*⁴ explains the nature of its functions meaning anything that stupefies the brain.

But *Hutama*, its sixth name, is very suggestive. It means remorse, a feeling of shame and disgrace, because abasement⁵ and intense remorse⁶ are some of the chastisements administered to the denizens of Hell which they may

¹ O you who believe! save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones; over it are angels stern and strong, they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them, and do as they are commanded. (66: 6).

² He will drink it little by little and will not be able to swallow it agreeably, and *distress* will come to him from every quarter, *but* he shall not die; and there shall be vehement chastisement before him. (14: 17).

³ Yea! whoever earns evil and his sins beset him on every side, these are the inmates of the fire: in it they shall abide. (2: 81.)

⁴ By no means! Surely it is a flaming fire. (70: 15).

⁵ Do they not know that whoever acts in opposition to Allah and His Apostle, he shall surely have the fire of hell to abide in it? That is the grievous abasement. (9: 63).

⁶ And those who followed shall say: Had there been for us a return, then we would renounce them as they have renounced us. Thus will Allah show them their deeds to be intense regret to them, and they shall not come forth from the fire. (2: 167).

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in no wise escape.¹ It shows that Hell is a mental torture : that its agonies are agonies of the mind.² For, otherwise, why else should our physical body share our troubles if to be nothing but an instrument? The body is a lifeless thing unless it comes under the operation of the mind. It is, as it were, an unconsenting party if it joins with us in our wrong doings. The principle of justice and equity do not punish a party who is forced to give his consent. Moreover, the verse which explains the nature of *Al-Hutamah*³ decides the question. Speaking of the fire of Hell the Qur-ân says, that it will come out of our own hearts. Here in this life we are conscious of the same burning of the heart, when a strong desire, unbecoming in its very nature, goads us on to do some wrong. The very idea of shame makes our blood hot and we feel as if we were being driven towards a pit of fire.

The Qur-ân makes mention of some seven gates of Hell meant for different classes of sinners.⁴ The doors would lead to seven spiritual evils.

I have already shown that no sooner does our consciousness begin to evolve than we need knowledge of right and wrong, which comes to us either by Revelation or by the requirements of the society in which we live. We find it in its rudimentary form in the Ten Commandments of Moses. They have again been developed into seven principles of good living in the first ten verses of chapter 23 of the Qur-ân, wherein the Book speaks of the birth of human mind. These principles have been given us so as to build the newly formed

¹ Abiding in it; their chastisement shall not be lightened nor shall they be given respite. (2: 162).

² Which rises above the hearts. (104: 7).

³ And what will make you realize what the crushing disaster is. (104: 5)

⁴ It has seven gates; for every gate there shall be a separate party of them. (15: 44).

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mind and to make it fit for heavenly life and they are ' :—

1. Good beliefs.
2. Humility in prayers.
3. Abstention from vanity and levity.
4. Purification as well as almsgiving.
5. Continence or purity in sexual relations.
6. The keeping of trust and covenants.
7. Remaining always on our guard against anything contrary to the demands of prayers.

What a wonderful and wise improvement we find here on the Ten Commandments of Moses. It would be sheer folly to call it plagiarism, as certain silly minds among the Christian missionaries generally do, who fail to realise that the Fountain-head of these two sets of injunction is one and the same, the One Lord, Who sends to humanity from time to time that knowledge of which it stands in urgent need. An evolved social law, like that laid down in the Qur-ân, could never have been appreciated by the Israelites of the time of Exodus. Hence the difference. The Qur-ân was given to coming generations when they became advanced in their requirements. This is the true explanation of the coincidences, otherwise Jesus would seem to have committed the worse type of literary larceny, since most of his sayings and parables can be easily traced to Krishna and Buddha.

¹ Except those who pray, Those who are constant at their prayer, and those in whose wealth there is a fixed portion, For him who begs and for him who is denied (good), And those who accept the truth of the judgment-day, And those who are fearful of the chastisement of their Lord—Surely the chastisement of their Lord is (a thing) not to be felt secure of—And those who guard their private parts, Except in the case of their wives or those whom their right hands possess—for there surely are not to be blamed, But he who seeks to go beyond the limits—And those who are faithful to their trusts this, these it is that go beyond and their covenant, And those who are upright in their testimonies, And those who keep a guard on their prayer, Those shall be in gardens, honoured. (70: 22-35).

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These seven principles comprise within their scope all that is needed to constitute the best form of society. The violation of even one of them involve a multitude of sins. Thus the whole course of evils becomes narrowed down to the breach of these seven injunctions, which therefore create the seven gates of Hell. ¹

We read, too, of nineteen warden of Hell. Consciousness, according to some psychologists, is only an assemblage of various passions; and I think that to so define the mind is not beside the mark. The whole generation of passions arises from two root-passions—Desire and Anger. These are, in fact, the mother-passions born of the knowledge which we receive from the external world, through our *senses* or through our *food* upon which we live. We have five outer senses which give rise to five inner ones—Hearing, Sight, Smell, Touch and Taste are the former. If any of the ten senses does not perform its functions properly, our knowledge will be defective and this will affect the two mother-passions.

But food has a far-reaching influence, indeed, when it becomes rarified into ideas and creates anger and desire in their best or worst forms. It should not be forgotten that ideation, according to certain modern writers, is also the result of the physical nature nourished by food. Food comes under the action of seven other faculties in the system before it becomes an idea.

1. *Jāzibah*.—This literally means pulling in, drawing or taking in. In the case of food, it would mean eating and drinking.

2. *Māsikah*.—The faculty of retaining food in the system.

¹ It has seven gates; for every gate there shall be a separate party of them. (15: 44).

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3. *Hāzimah*.—The power of digestion.
4. *Dāfi'ah*.—The faculty of getting rid of deleterious matter derived from food.
5. *Ghāziah*.—The faculty of nutrition.
6. *Nāmiah*.—The faculty of growth.
7. *Muwallidah*.—Creative agency.

Food could not perform its function properly if any one of the above mentioned seven faculties were out of order. It would naturally give rise to false ideation.

The seven faculties, combined with the tēn senses, instantly create these two passions, which, in their turn, branch away into various passions which control all our actions. Thus these nineteen agencies have direct bearing on our morals. If Hell is a place where we are chastened so that we turn from evil to good it will be the work of said agencies to subject us to some sort of treatment to remedy our moral defects.

Hell, as it appears from the Qur-ān, is only an hospital or purgatory for moral and spiritual cure. How can our mere belief in some intermediary, whether Jesus or another, cure our disease, or act as an antidote in our system?

Again, Heaven is not a delimited area. The Qur-ān says that it brings all the heavens and the earth within its circumstances.¹ It ought to be so, if it is intended for our minds, because we leave the body here, where we die; and even here the mind when it is free from physical taints, requires a very vast area for its exercise. With the aid of imagination it reaches the corners of the earth. But if we die with a

¹ Hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and to a garden the extensiveness of which is as the extensiveness of the heaven and the earth; it is prepared for those who believe in Allah and His Apostles; that is the grace of Allah: He gives it to whom He pleases, and Allah is the Lord of mighty grace. (57: 21).

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mind which is still fast, and in the snares of our carnal nature, it must gravitate to the earth, seeing that that carnal nature is of the earth. The doors of heaven too must remain closed to us, since earthly things cannot live in those regions. We shall hover between the earth and heaven, and Hell alone can purge us clean of earthly tendencies. How can the suffering of another for us free us of such a burden?

Many men jeer at the very idea of Heaven and Hell. But if science tell us to believe in the continuity of life, we must also admit the possibility of its happy and miserable aspects, which in the Sacred Books have been named Heaven and Hell. Besides, if the principle of causation is another verity and we must reap what we sow, our various actions here would remain unrequited. There must be a day of requital¹ at least for such actions as remain unrecompensed in this life. We may not understand the nature of these future conditions, but our inability to do so does not justify our denial of their existence. Even with all our flight of imagination, we often fail here on the earth to picture an earthly thing as it really is. It would not be a matter for surprise, therefore, if we fail to appreciate truly the things of the future life, especially when they are of different substance from those on the earth. It may be said that in a sense, the mind and the spirit are the foundations of Heaven and Hell. The Holy Prophet has simply stated a truth when he quotes our Lord in the following words:—

Allah says : I have prepared for My righteous servants what no eye has seen and no ear has heard and what the heart of man has not conceived.

The Qur-ân, however, explains to us these verities in their general character. True, it makes mention of many of the delights of Heaven and calls them by names associated

¹ Master of the day of requital. (1: 3).

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with many things here on earth such as milk, honey, musk, and fruits of various kinds. But at the same time it warns us against conceiving of them as in their earthly form. They have been described figuratively and in parables as the Book says which goes on to tell us that God has created for us two Heavens, one here and the other in the hereafter.¹ So it is also in the case of Hell, in order that we may have a foretaste² of future conditions, with this difference, that only the heaven and hell of earth are but shadows of the things to come. There is also another difference, which is this that here we find those things in earthly alloyed form. -

If the chiding spirit becomes materialized in the strongest possible manner taking the form of Resurrection, as explained above, the other four stages of Spiritual Evolution will become actualized in their best aspects and will take the form of heaven. It is absolutely inconsistent for a doubting mind to laugh at Resurrection or Hell and Heaven because he himself has realized the pangs of conscience here, and is eager for the happiness which even falls here to the lot of such blessed ones as have become free from internal struggles and remains satisfied. No one can avert the toils of life, but such men as I have mentioned keep their minds unruffled under all circumstances being serenely indifferent to pains and pleasures. If such serenity of mind and happiness of soul are things to be coveted, they will come to us in their fullest excellence in Heaven. Its chief characteristics, as given in the Qur-ân, are as follows: In Heaven we shall be

¹ And besides these two are two (other) gardens. (55: 62).

² And convey good news to those who believe and do good deeds, that they shall have gardens in which rivers flow; whenever they shall be given a portion of the fruit thereof, they shall say: 'This is what was given to us before; and they shall be given the like of it, and they shall have pure mates in them, and in them they shall abide. (2: 25).

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free from all troubles and trials ¹ and released from every sort of anxiety, fear and grief, ² we shall listen to no absurd or vain talk, ³ nor shall behold any vanity or levity of character. Doubtless we shall have some sort of food and drink for our nourishment there but these will never be attended with illness or disease. ⁴ Our good actions have been compared to fruits in Heaven in the Holy Book. Here also we enjoy the fruits of our labour. If our beliefs in truths here are the seeds of all our righteousness, they will be planted there, as well as seeds in our system. Our actions will water them and transform them into a radiant garden. It is for this reason that wherever the Book speaks of beliefs and good actions, it compares them with gardens watered by perennial streams flowing beneath them. ⁵ Our actions there will bring these streams to the surface. The streams may be of a water, the component elements of which are beyond our comprehension, but they are the transformation of our actions in this life. The Arabic word *Jannat* is very significant. It

¹ Who has made us alight in a house abiding for ever out of His grace: toil shall not touch us therein, nor shall fatigue therein afflict us. (35: 35).

² O My servants! there is no fear for you this day, nor shall you grieve. (43: 68).

³ They shall not hear therein any vain discourse, but only "Peace," and they shall have their sustenance therein morning and evening. (19: 62).

⁴ They shall not be affected with headache thereby, nor shall they get exhausted. (56: 19).

⁵ Who made the earth a resting-place for you and the heaven a *structure*, and (Who) sends down rain from the cloud then brings forth with it subsistence for you of the fruits; therefore do not set up rivals to Allah while you know. (2: 22).

And convey good news to those who believe and do good deeds, that they shall have gardens in which rivers flow; whenever they shall be given a portion of the fruit thereof, they shall say: This is what was given to us before; and they shall be given the like of it, and they shall have pure mates in them, and in them they shall abide. (2: 25).

And We will remove whatever of ill-feeling is in their breasts; the rivers shall flow beneath them and they shall say: All praise is due to Allah Who guided us to this, and we would not have found the way had it not been that Allah had guided us; certainly the apostles of our Lord brought the truth, and it shall be cried out to them that this is the garden of which you are made heirs for what you did. (7: 43).

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means primarily something hidden. It also means a garden with trees luxuriant in growth. Every piece of land sown with various seeds is a garden in embryo while all the seeds remain hidden. It is *Jannat* in the first meaning of the word. But, when the seeds come up and trees grow, it becomes *Jannat* in the other sense. Even here, those who do not lead dissolute lives and hold themselves aloof from any sort of dissipation, enjoy a form of heavenly life by reason of their good beliefs and righteous actions. The Heaven to come is but the materialization of these beliefs and actions. It is the garden of our own nature, where all our good faculties will grow and bear fruit a hundredfold.

The Muslim Paradise is not, it must be understood, a garden for the voluptuary, where he may sit in the company of maidens under the shade of trees, with goblets of wine circling continually for the enjoyment of the dissipated. We read, it is true, of *Hûr*¹ in the Muslim Paradise. We are told that the women of our family² will also be with us in Heaven, purified like ourselves. Some commentators of the Qur-ân take these *Hûrs* to mean our own wives, mothers and sisters, but others regard them as belonging to some heavenly order, where beautiful damsels and boys have been called *Hûr* and *Ghilmân*. I see no harm in this interpretation. Woman is not a despicable companion to us in our earthly career, though sickly theologians may call them to be the "Gateway of Hell." St. Jerome, St. Cyril, Tertullian and other Christian fathers have made these pious aspersions on those who might have been their better halves, and the like,

¹ Thus (shall it be), and We will unite them with pure, beautiful ones. (44: 54).

² The Gardens of perpetual abode which they will enter along with those who do good from among their parents and their spouses and their offspring; and the angels will enter in upon them from every gate. (13: 23).

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as they are indeed our better halves. They are our utmost happiness and their company is the choicest of God's blessings. Though when misfortune and ill-luck transfer their affection and love to alien quarters, they make the life a hell. But we are assured that these damsels of heaven will be possessed of a pure and spotless heart,' which the very word *Hûr* literally means. Their eyes, fascinating as they may be, will not be the bearers of amorous message. They will in no wise pander to any unworthy feelings. Besides, they will be of no earthly order, nor would they stand in connubial relations to us in the earthly meaning of the word. We shall all be free of physical appetites and there will be no further procreation of the species, which, when all is said and done, is the main object of all matrimonial connections on earth. It may be said that the *Hûrs* are not wanted, if they are not to play the rôle of wife as in our earthly sojourn. But those who say so only betray the hollowness of their own minds. Even in this life bed is not the best part of our happiness. All earthly tastes lose their attractions for us when we pass a certain age. Intellectual or spiritual pleasures alone can captivate us for good. Knowledge, and not the flesh, is our real pleasure.

The Qur-an uses various names to denote the things of the future life. If we take their meanings literally, they all refer to some sort of knowledge, and the place that intervenes between Hell and Heaven also has been called *A'râf* which means knowledge.

In short, Heaven is a spiritual experience of the best

1 And pure, beautiful ones. (56: 22).

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type whereby all desires will be more than satisfied.¹ Everything will be of an honourable character with no ignoble feature of any kind. The Qur-ān suggests this idea in the clearest terms when it gives us the list of those who are entitled to enter into the heavenly abode. Their very characters show that it would not be a place for licentiousness. Here are some of them :—

1. Those who hold good beliefs and translate them into actions.

2. Those who lead a pious life or have come under the forgiveness of the Compassionate Lord. -

3. Those who possess humility of mind and are penitent in heart and whose minds have become purified of all alloy.

4. Those who on earth kept their promises and fulfilled their covenants.

5. Those who are righteous and not only remain in prayer, but translate the demands of their prayers into actions.

6. Those who have become cleansed of all their wrong desires and whose hearts are pure of every error.

In short, good deeds of all kinds—piety, righteousness, patience, chastity, charity, almsgiving, regard for bounds, truthfulness, abstention from absurdity and vanity, giving good advice to others are the chief qualities of those who will

¹ O My servants! there is no fear for you this day, nor shall you grieve. (43 : 68).

Those who believed in Our communications and were submissive : (43 : 69). Enter the garden, you and your *wives*; you shall be made happy. (43 : 70).

There shall be sent round to them golden bowls and drinking-cups, and therein shall be what their souls yearn after and (wherein) the eyes shall delight, and you shall abide therein. (43 : 71).

And this is the garden which you are given as an inheritance on account of what you did. (43 : 72).

For you therein are many fruits of which you shall eat. (43 : 73).

Surely the guilty shall abide in the chastisement of hell. (43 : 74).

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enter into the Paradise of the Lord. Again, it has been repeatedly shown that peace will reign supreme there so much so that Heaven has also been named, *Dâr-es-Salâm*, the House of Peace. All our highest capabilities which have remained latent here, will come to full fruition there. For this reason Heaven has been also named *Dâr-en-Na'im*, the House of good gifts.

In this connection, I will narrate here some of the evil things which, according to the Qur-ân, will carry men to Hell : Guilt, injustice, pride, niggardliness, ungratefulness, rebellion, inordinacy, doubts as to truths, transgressions of limits, the forbidding of good deeds, want of good deeds, disbelief, opposition to God, polytheism.

The above mentioned virtues and vices clearly explain the nature of Heaven and Hell. They exclude all idea of earthly things. All of them appertain to things mental or spiritual. The Qur-ân, therefore, makes a lucid but true statement of the coming reality. It says that we come here with the highest capabilities, but at the beginning start at the lowest rung of the ladder. We have to work out our own advancement and reach, as best as we can, the highest stage of our growth. We are on an evolutionary journey and we have been given every kind of guidance to carry us to our destination. We come on the earth to prepare ourselves for future progress. If we can develop our faculties to such an extent as will enable us to enter into a life of future progress, we leave the life of this world successful. But if we cannot do so, we shall have first to become cleansed of our impurities which have stuck to us in our sojourn on earth, and when we are purged thereof we shall begin our journey and ultimately reach the place wherefrom we came at first. We came from Light and to Light shall we ascend.

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The Holy Qur-ân, when speaking of Heaven, says that it is like the heavens and the earth in its vastness. When the Holy Prophet was speaking about this verse to his companions there chanced to be present an Ambassador from the Roman Emperor Heraclius, who observed that if Heaven were so extensive, it would hardly leave any room for Hell—a remark very much to the point. But the reply was more than equal to it. “God be glorified,” said the Holy Prophet, “where is the night when the day comes?” This may not be appreciated by those who imagine the universe to be a three-storeyed house, with our earth as the middle one. But the Qur-ânic verse and the Holy Prophet’s comment thereon explains the whole thing on a scientific basis. It is the earthly matter in us which gravitates us towards the planet. The moment we lose such matter we depart from it, as indeed we find in the case of birds. If death consists in the separation of the spirit from the body, the former cannot remain attached to the earth without its physical clothing. But since low passions are a rarefied form of earthly matter, the spirit, if filled with such passions, cannot go beyond certain regions in the adjoining space, and, like a toy balloon filled with gas, cannot ascend beyond a certain height. As long as there are earthly passions in us, we shall have to remain hovering in a place called Hell. The doors of Heaven will be opened to us only when we are purged of all carnal desires. We may have any substance for our body, it will be much lighter than the clay out of which we are now fashioned. That body, indeed, may be of electrons or of light itself, as we read in the Qur-ân. Supposing we could visualise a species of balloon, made of electrical matter with a man sitting in it whose body itself was made of the same substance with various devices for eating and drinking, but all of the same substance, it would be an easy matter for the person in the

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balloon to move throughout the whole space of the universe with electric rapidity. A similar description has been given by the Holy Prophet of our movements in the Heaven.

As to the pleasures of Heaven, we may enjoy them in the same way as we enjoy our pleasures on earth. But since our various organs, our tastes, digestion and the rest, will not be the product of earth, the things for our enjoyment in Heaven cannot be of earthly nature. I am neither exaggerating nor inventing when I say that I have known Muslim gentlemen of rare piety who at times used to enjoy the delicious flavour and taste of several fruits without actually eating any. Men of that character sometimes hear the loveliest music, the most bewitching songs when none actually is being played. I know of another friend, who once had a novel experience. He was neither dreaming nor in a trance, but he was quite wide-awake sitting meditating at midnight. He felt as if he was in the company of a woman and appreciated her company. The Qur-án has also referred to this when it says that the inmates of heaven when given a portion of the fruit thereof shall say: "This is what was given to us before: they shall *be given the like of it.*" The italicised words most eloquently explain that the pleasures of Heaven will be like those we enjoy here, but not of the same nature. There is another similar statement in Chapter 76 which tells of the various pleasures which we shall enjoy in Heaven. Now, for example, camphor is the best of antiseptics, and the Book, after mentioning the condition of the sinners in Hell, speaks of the righteous who drink of a cup the admixture of which is camphor." After a patient's bowels have been thoroughly purged he needs an antiseptic because he has still germs of putrefaction in his system. After he is fully relieved he requires a tonic. Ginger, they say, is one of the finest

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invigorating medicines; so we read in the same chapter that the inmates of Heaven will be given to drink "a cup the admixture of which shall be of ginger." ¹

We need nourishment wherever we may be, and if we perceive the nourishing value of those fruits, the namesakes of which will be given us in Heaven. It shows that they are invigorating and stimulating especially in cases of heart weakness. If the heart is the seat of the mind then it must have in the heavenly regions similar food like that which is beneficial to it on earth.

The Holy Qur-án thus also explains many other aspects of this subject, nourishment in Heaven and Hell being one of them. Everything is to be nourished, but its nourishment is derived from the same substance as that which gives it its body. If, on our death, we have to leave our bodies behind us, then we cannot naturally assimilate anything of the earth by way of nutrition. But since the mind of the sinner, at his resurrection, will long for earthly things, these hankerings will of themselves place him in torment on account of their absence in those regions. He will feel that he is forbidden the very things which he used to enjoy on earth. On the other hand, he will be interested in the heavenly food, because he will find some of his friends there enjoying it. If he asks them to share their delicacies with him, and if they refuse, it will be all too natural. The verse further explains the stuff of which the food will be prepared. It will be light. Our bodies will be made of light, for otherwise we would not be able to assimilate any articles made of light. This takes us a step further. Charcoal has within it various gems of light, and a stage comes when every piece of coal becomes all light. But before reaching that brilliant state, every particle of soot

¹ And they shall be made to drink therein a cup the admixture of which shall be ginger. (76: 17).

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and smoke must be consumed. It must also go through fire to get the brilliance which is innate in it. It is just the same with us. We come fully from light, as I have explained elsewhere. That light became denser and denser until, eventually, it assumed the form of the earth which brought forth man as its best product. From this condition we enter upon a sort of backward journey for we have to return to the same condition of light, so it is not surprising if a case-hardened mind, full of metaphorical soot and smoke, is thrown into a pit of fire. But he must live on something and that something is, as the Qur-án says, the fruit of a tree called *Zaqqum*.

The tree of *Zaqqum*¹ has been mentioned in the Qur-án as growing at the bottom of Hell. Its fruit, it is said, will be the food of the sinful. It will boil in their bellies. They will be thirsty and run for water and they will be given boiling water to drink. The very description shows that the fruit would act as an aperient medicine. A Muslim divine, who was also an experienced physician, treated a syphilitic patient with a fruit of the same name which grows in India. The patient felt hot and the physician gave him hot water which caused a violent evacuation of the bowels. Motion after motion came bringing out black deleterious matter from his stomach, and the patient was relieved. The Holy Qur-án suggested the idea to the physician, and he used to apply it in all serious cases. I read of another similarity between hospital and Hell as given in the Qur-án. When a patient is admitted into a hospital he is often accompanied by his friends; but if he is under treatment for some very serious disease, no visitor is allowed to see him. A sort of a wall, a barrier, as it were, is placed between him and those who

¹ Surely it is a tree that grows in the bottom of the hell; (37: 64).

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are in good health. He does not see them again unless and until he is fully cured. His friends may come to enquire after him, but they are not allowed to see him. So we read in the Qur-ân, when it speaks of a wall raised between the hypocrite and the believer,¹ separating the two each from the other. The Holy Book speaks also about the duration of Heaven and Hell. Heaven, it says, is an everlasting gift that will never be cut off.* It establishes the eternity of Heaven, but, as Hell is only a purifying entity, it cannot exist if there are no impurities of wrong inclinations to be got rid of. It must exist as long as the two things exist; because no one can enter Heaven unless he has a pure spirit. These impurities are no other than the earthly passions in us which, in their uncontrolled condition, are the cause of wrong-doing during our earthly sojourn. We may not have any occasion to do more sins after our death for lack of means, but the inclination to do so will subsist in us as long as these passions survive. They are a kind of barrier between the sinner and the heavenly abode, which, indirectly, give rise to Hell. If we commit sin, it is on account of these inclinations which emanate therefrom; and if we continue to feel the said inclination after death, it is for the same reason. These passions, in their uncleansed form, even after death, must tend towards earth for their satisfaction. They will exist as long as the earth exists, and will create a hankering in us to return to the terrestrial sphere, but we shall not be able to gratify them for want of a physical body,—the necessary

¹ On the day when the hypocritical men and the hypocritical women will say to those who believe: Wait for us, that we may have light from your light; it shall be said: Turn back and seek a light. The separation would be brought about between them, with a wall having a door in it; (as for) the inside of it, there shall be mercy in it, and (as for) the outside of it before it there shall be chastisement. (57: 13).

* And as to those who are made happy, they shall be in the garden, abiding in it as long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as *your* Lord please: a gift which shall never be cut off. (11: 108).

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wherewithal of earthly life,—for the body is left behind on our death and reduced to its elements. This inability will act as a second barrier between our inclinations and the means to satisfy them.¹ A sinner will thus have two barriers, one before him and the other behind him. The struggle between the tendency and the inability to satisfy it will surely create a new hell for a sinner, which must co-exist with the earth, and would naturally come to an end if our planet were to be destroyed. We read in the Qur-ân of a calamity which will be the end of the earth. The Book speaks of some terrible concussion that will shatter it to pieces, and make the mountains, which were created to keep the earth steady, like unto loosened wool² with the men on it scattered like moths in space. The calamity will be in the nature of a collision of the earth with some larger heavenly body, as science also says when discussing the possible fate of our planet. If Hell be co-existent with the earth, it must disappear with it. But we read of a third thing co-existing with Hell. The Book, when speaking of sinners in Hell, says, they will abide therein so long as the heaven and the earth endure. This statement, however, makes no difference to my point of view. The Arabic words, *Arḍ* and *Samāwāt*, which correspond to the English words the *earth* and the *heavens* respectively, do not literally mean the earth and the heavens. Their primary meaning refer rather to the position they occupy in space than to the substance of which they are made. *Arḍ* in Arabic means anything that stands below another thing, while *Samā* means height. The two words are thus relative, so much so that the first of the seven heavens may be called *Arḍ* of the second heaven. Similarly the second may be termed *Arḍ* in

¹ And a barrier shall be placed between them and *that* which they desire, as was done with the likes of them before; surely they are in a disquieting doubt. (34 : 54).

² And the mountains shall be as loosened wool. (101 : 5).

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relation to the third. It shows that though the regions, here called *Samāwāt*, of the heavens may survive the extinction of the earth, yet they will not be called by their present names. If the demolition of the earth will make an end of Hell the word *Samāwāt* will no longer be applied to the regions now so called. There is, however, another word in the verse under discussion which gives rise to a misconception as to the duration of Hell, and that word is *Abad*, which has been wrongly interpreted as *eternity*. But *abad* has *ābād* as its plural, while the idea of eternity cannot admit of plurality. Eternity is one indivisible thing. Therefore, the word *Abad* only means a very long period. The existence of Hell cannot be ascribed to any Divine revenge or to the passion of an "angered deity." The Qur-ān absolutely denies any such reason. It says that God is not interested in any way in punishing us.¹ But as we have not used His gifts aright, and therefore remain unfit for further progress, we are sent to Hell for the removal of all that retards our progress in the coming life.

¹ *Why* should Allah *chastise you* if you are grateful and believe? And Allah is the Multiplier of rewards, Knowing. (4: 147).

CHAPTER V.

RIDDLES OF LIFE: KISMET

We are often beset with what may be called the riddles of life. We are in a maze but have no notion how we are to get out of it. We want knowledge because the very consciousness of ignorance serves to increase our ignorance. We are sometimes comfortably off and enjoying life, when some sudden and unforeseen mishap upsets all our calculations and changes our prospects completely. These abnormal events, for such they seem to be, need a proper explanation as to their why and wherefore in order to put us on our guard and set us on the true path of happiness. Science is of very little assistance to us for the purpose. It seems to favour Fatalism which is about the worst thing possible. It renders us helpless, and at the same time weakens our sense of responsibility. Men of Science hold that since everything in the material world runs on pre-ordained lines, events being already pre-ordained, therefore it must be the same with human affairs. In short, if we need a light to guide us out of the complexities of life, it is here. We must have a clear view of the case. It is not only a matter of religion; it is a most important factor in all mundane affairs, and no system of theology prior to the coming of Islam has had a word to say on the subject. The Qur-án is the only book that enlightens us. It shows us a clear way and saves us from groping in the dark. Evil often comes to us as if it were an uninvited and most unwelcome guest. Knowledge from God should enable us to deal with it when it comes, for no man-contrived system of philosophy has ever succeeded in evolving

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a satisfactory solution of the problem. Some refer to Kismet—an Arabic word used by Orientalists to convey the idea of predestination—though its literal meaning is ‘division’ or ‘distribution’. It is thought that good and evil are pre-arranged entities, and that they have already been allotted by the Lord amongst the people of the world. No effort, therefore, on their part can change their course, while they act as playthings in the hands of Fate. No prophet of God ever taught a tenet so dastardly as this—which could relieve men of all responsibility for their actions. We, however, find a similar doctrine in the Church creed, but it is none of Jesus’s teaching. Since the days of Saint Athanasius the doctrine of predestination has been laid down in all Christian creeds as an article of faith. It has taken a practical shape in every Christian home at the birth of babies still-born, or who die before they can be baptised. The poor souls are believed to be condemned by the Lord to eternal perdition, and must be buried in unconsecrated ground. This division of Mankind into “the saved” and “the unsaved” smacks strongly of predestination.

The Qur-ān gives us a sailing direction, as it were, by the aid of which we may steer a safe course through the troubled waters. First of all, we have been warned that we are under the governance of the Law. All laws are unchangeable and admit of no infringement. Their breach is sin, which entails unavoidable penalty. We must therefore respect the laws if we wish to keep ourselves immune from trouble. In this connection, the Book makes special mention of certain laws, which regulate our lives. These we must always keep before our eyes if we are to avoid disappointment and disaster.

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The laws of Causation and Requitall work together under certain circumstances. But any confusion of ideas with regard to them opens the door to an infinity of trouble. We must know that events occur under a course prescribed by God, and that everything has got its cause, as a result of which it inevitably appears. Similarly no action remains without its requital under Divine Decree. God has, therefore, been described as the cause of all things. We create circumstances, that develop under Divine Ordinance, to produce a result. We touch the cord and the instrument begins to sound automatically in accordance with His laws. By way of illustration, I may refer to the law at work in the vegetable kingdom. God made them to bring things to fruition wherever or by whomsoever they are grown. In this way God is the producer of the harvest, but its *first* cause is the person who planted the seed. If we sow wild oats they will produce an evil harvest under His laws, but we shall have to reap the crop which we have sown.

We often commit wrong under the impression that we shall evade detection or escape the consequences. We have, therefore, been clearly told in the Holy Qur-ān that we are under the eye of a Supervisor Who reads all that is hidden even in the innermost recesses of our hearts and knows everything that is concealed. ¹ As to the consequences, we are warned that these must inevitably ensue under the working of the laws concerned. The truth is perhaps best expressed by the principle that God brings forth good and evil consequences as they arise under His laws. And in this respect three things have been told us.

¹ And if you are upon a journey and you do not find a scribe, then (there may be a security taken into possession, but if one of you trusts another, then he who is trusted should deliver his trust, and let him be careful (of his duty to), Allah, his Lord; and do not conceal testimony, and whoever conceals it, his heart is surely sinful; and Allah knows what you do. (2: 283).

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That all responsibility lies on our shoulders. Thus says the Qur-ān :

Allah does not impose upon any soul a duty beyond the extent of his ability ; for it is (the benefit of) what it has earned, and upon it (the evil of) what it has wrought. ¹

Again—Whoever goes aright, for his own soul does he go aright, and whoever goes astray, to his detriment only does he go astray.

It may be that your Lord will have mercy on you, and if you again return (to disobedience), We too will return to punishment. ²

Surely, Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition. ³

That no one will bear our burden. The incidence of our action will fall on us. ⁴

That no one will intercede with the Lord on our behalf but under His previous and special permission. ⁵

¹ Allah does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability ; for it is (the benefit of) what it has earned, and upon it (the evil of) what it has wrought : Our Lord ! do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake ; our Lord ! do not lay on us a burden as Thou didst lay on those before us ; our Lord ! do not impose upon us that which we have not the strength to bear ; and pardon us and grant us protection and have mercy on us, Thou art our Patron, so help us against the unbelieving people. (2 : 286).

² It may be that your Lord will have mercy on you, and if you again return (to disobedience) We too will return (to punishment), and we have made hell a prison for the unbelievers. (17 : 8).

³ For his sake there are angels following one another, before him and behind him, who guard him by Allah's commandment ; Surely Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition ; and when Allah intends evil to a people, there is no averting it and besides Him they have no protector. (13 : 11).

⁴ Whoever goes aright, for his own soul does he go aright ; and whoever goes astray, to its detriment only does he go astray ; nor can the bearer of a burden bear the burden of another, nor do We chastise until We raise an apostle. (17 : 15).

⁵ Allah is He besides Whom there is no god, the Ever-living, Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist ; slumber does not overtake Him nor sleep ; whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His, who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission ? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge except what He pleases ; His knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth and the preservation of them both tires Him not, and He is the Most High, the Great. (2 : 255).

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The Law of Measure.—Divine Economy has created very few things, but has put them to many uses. These work under different measures and in different ways to serve different purposes. But if we change the measures and ways which have been fixed by the Divine Law harm must result. These measures, in themselves, are not conducive to any evil, but the harm is engendered when we do not apply them as they should be applied. These measures and ways have been called in the Qur'an the "Bounds of God," and he who trespasses against them is punished as an evil-doer.¹ We, therefore, have been exhorted to acquire knowledge of these bounds. We are never punished unless we are given that knowledge beforehand.² The Book recommends the following three ways by which it may be acquired :—

(a) The first way is through observation. We have been given all possible means of information; we possess various senses and we have been advised to use them.³

(b) We must not behave like animals in the use of our eyes and ears, but we must make intelligent deductions and inferences from the knowledge we receive, otherwise through our ignorance we shall court disaster.⁴

¹ O you who believe! do not forbid (yourselves) the good things which Allah has made lawful for you and do not exceed the limits; surely Allah does not love those who exceed the limits. (5: 87).

² Whoever goes aright, for his own soul does he go aright; and whoever goes astray, to its detriment only does he go astray; nor can the bearer of the burden bear the burden of another, nor do We chastise until We raise an apostle. (17: 15).

³ So We proportion it—how well are We at proportioning (things). (77: 23).

⁴ And certainly We have created for hell many of the jinn and the men; they have hearts with which they do not understand, and they have eyes with which they do not see, and they have ears with which they do not hear; they are as cattle, nay, they are in worse error; these are the heedless ones. (7: 179).

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(c) But there are things which call for minute observation which is not within everyman's capacity; and consequences, moreover, are very slow in coming especially in the case of moral delinquencies. This delayed action leads us to disregard moral laws. Sometimes we remain unaware of their very existence. Revelation from God, therefore, comes to enlighten us on these things. ¹

Vicissitudes of life occur for our instruction and often come in the guise of hardship, leaving an indelible impression on the tablet of our mind to be our guide for the future.

Whenever we go against the knowledge thus gained we are straightway punished; but since our actions are judged by the All-Knowing Lord, He knows the extent of the knowledge we have received, and judges us accordingly. He makes every concession on this score, for punishment never comes unless we have received guidance beforehand and have ignored it. But we cannot plead ignorance before him, as He knows all that is manifest or hidden. But He is not a judge Who is out to administer the extreme penalties of the law in every case. In judging between two parties, He acts as justice demands, but in dealing with our wrongs He is not so strict as an average judge. For this reason the Book styles Him as "the Owner of Requitals." He may award punishment to an offender or He may remit it, but he never makes an arbitrary use of His discretion. The three redeeming factors which invite His forgiveness are our forgetfulness, our mistakes and our inability to meet the requirements of the case. If some wrong is done under circumstances which are beyond the control of the doer he is not punished. Every case is decided on its own merits and God deals graciously

¹ I am Allah the Seeing. (This is) a book which We have revealed to you (that you may bring forth men, by their Lord's permission, from utter darkness into light to the way of the Mighty, the Praised One. (14: 1).

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with cases which deserve His consideration.' Punishment is seldom external. Sometimes it takes such a form as venereal diseases, that punish from within the man who vitiates his blood through misconduct. The punishment of the Lord is of the same nature. He does not take delight in seeing us punished.² He has given us various gifts, but if we abuse them the very fact in itself becomes punishment. The Qur-ân calls it a thing acquired.³ We read of Divine discretion in the matter of punishment and forgiveness, but it works only in cases where our actions deserve some punishment. It never comes undeservedly, but when a punishable wrong is committed, He may exercise His discretion of forgiveness. But if the remission of punishment would only confirm the offender in wrong-doing, the law will take its course. As long as He finds any redeeming feature in our conduct His mercy outweighs His anger; but when men are surrounded with sin and crime on all sides, punishment becomes inevitable and is meted out in proportion to the measure of the evil done. Good actions receive plentiful rewards, but misdeeds invite corresponding punishment.

Free will is the best gift granted to us by the Lord. No other creature in the world besides man has been endowed with freedom of action. Other creatures work as machines. But the Lord has given to Man, His vicegerent, the power

¹ Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allah's and whether you manifest what is in your minds or hide it, Allah will call you to account according to it; then He will forgive whom He pleases and chastise whom He pleases, and Allah has power over all things. (2: 284).

² Why should Allah chastise you if you are grateful and believe? and Allah is the Multiplier of rewards, Knowing. (4: 147).

³ And leave those you have taken their religion for a play and an idle sport, and whom this world's life has deceived, and remind (them) thereby lest a soul should be given up to destruction for what it has earned: it shall not have besides Allah any guardian or an intercessor, and if it should seek to give every compensation, it shall not be accepted from it; these are they who shall be given up to destruction for what they earned; they shall have a drink of boiling water and a painful chastisement because they disbelieved. (6: 70).

of discretion. He wants us to be as sound in our judgment as He is Himself. Every latitude has been given us to perfect the exercise of the gift, and it is His wish that we should always take the right course but not under compulsion. We needed three things and we have them.

(a) *True Knowledge of Things*.—We have been given all necessary information, and have also been told how to acquire it so that it may guide us in the exercise of right judgment.

(b) Nothing should come in our way to interfere with our judgment. We are, therefore, allowed to pursue the course which we choose for ourselves. Equal facilities are given to the righteous and the wicked in this respect, and the Book speaks of it in the following words:—

All do We aid—these as well as those—out of the bounty of your Lord and the bounty of your Lord is not confined. ¹

Everything has been left to our choice. Whatever course we elect to adopt we find no one to check it. All things come to us if we exert ourselves, whether we make a right use of them or not. Men enjoy all the amenities of life which makes them forgetful of the actual situation. They commit sin after sin as if unnoticed, until the Law of Recompense moves and they are brought to naught.

(c) *Chastisement*.—This is most essential as a disciplinary measure. We should be punished and should suffer the evil consequences of wrong judgment, otherwise we shall not realize the effects of wrong discretion. If it be God's will that we should cultivate soundness of judgment, He will chasten us. ²

¹ All do We aid—these as well as those—out of the bounty of *your* Lord, and the bounty of *your* Lord is not confined. (17: 20).

² And certainly We sent (apostles) to nations before *you* then We seized them with distress and affliction in order that they might humble themselves. (6: 42).

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Guidance and Misguidance.—Misconception of this principle has given rise to various false notions. Had it been left to the wishes of the Lord, He would have put all of us on the right path, but in that case we should have been mere automatons. To start with He sets us all on the right path,¹ and then leaves us to our discretion. We abuse it often and come near destruction, and in this connection the Qur-ân speaks of the Divine discretion that is used always to our benefit.² He may practise it to correct us or He may leave us to our own desires according to our past conduct.³ If He sees that we respect words of guidance we receive, He helps us ; but if He finds that we do not seek it, He leaves us to misguidance. When a person passes it and there is no hope of his reclamation God decrees him to be misguided in which case no one can put him on the right path. This fact has been disclosed to us as a warning, but it is often taken as a piece of fatalism. This is what the Qur-ân says plainly, but it has been misread by many.

In conclusion, I would refer to the laws of light and darkness working in Nature, which I think will explain the whole problem. The Sun is the source of all light, but if we close the windows of our room, it will become dark, and if we choose to remain in it for a considerable time our eyesight will suffer. The misfortune occurs to us under the working of the Divine Laws, but we ourselves are the real cause. In order to emphasize the case the Qur-ân says that God works out mishaps. The Book first speaks of the various evil courses adopted by sinners and then says :—

¹ And they who reject our communications are deaf and dumb, in utter darkness ; Whom Allah pleases He causes to err, and whom He pleases He puts on the right way. (6 : 39).

² And thus do We try some of them by others so that they say : Are these they upon whom Allah has conferred benefit from among us ? Does not Allah best know the grateful ? (6 : 53).

³ But whoever repents after his iniquity and reform (himself), then surely Allah will turn to him mercifully ; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (5 : 39).

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Their parable is like the parable of one who kindled a fire but when it had illumined all around him *Allah* took away their light and left them in utter darkness—they do not see.¹

The Prophet in the words of the Qur-ān kindles the fire to expel the darkness from his neighbourhood, but there are people who would not care to listen to his words, and depart from him. They will reach the place where they will find no light. Words of advice fall on them as though on deaf ears. Thus they become dumb and deaf and blind for the purposes of guidance. It should not be forgotten that this stage of sinfulness comes only to man after a life of iniquity and unrighteousness. Whenever the Qur-ān speaks of this condition, it refers only to those who sin consistently over a long period and become case-hardened; and here I will mention a few cases in point—sins which are apt to take hold of our lives.

(1) Breach of covenant (5: 13); (2) Lying and hypocrisy (5: 41); (3) Injustice (5: 51); (4) Rejection of Divine Communications (6: 39); (5) Pride (7: 40); (6) Transgression (7: 102); (7) Want of observation, like animals (7: 179); (8) Forsaking of God (9: 67); (9) Exceeding Limits (10: 74); (10) Immoderation in religious law (5: 77); (11) Following low desires (6: 56); (12) Acting against the will of the Lord (4: 168); (13) Disregarding punishment if it comes (6: 43).

¹ Their parable is like the parable of one who kindled fire, but when it had illumined all around him, Allah took away their light, and left them in utter darkness—they do not see. (2: 17).

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